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THE ARTIST BIOPIC: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE CINEMA, 1934-2010

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ABSTRACT

The thesis provides an historical overview of the artist biopic that has emerged as a distinct sub-genre of the biopic as a whole, totalling some ninety films from Europe and America alone since the first talking artist biopic in 1934. Their making usually reflects a determination on the part of the director or star to see the artist as an alter-ego. Many of them were adaptations of successful literary works, which tempted financial backers by having a ready-made audience based on a pre-established reputation. The sub-genre's development is explored via the grouping of films with associated themes and the use of case studies. These examples can then be used as models for exploring similar sets of data from other countries and time periods.

The specific topics chosen for discussion include the representation of a single painter, for example, Vincent Van Gogh, to see how the treatment of an artist varies across several countries and over seventy years. British artist biopics are analysed as a case study in relation to the idea of them posing as a national stereotype. Topics within sex and gender studies are highlighted in analysis of the representation of the female artist and the queer artist as well as artists who have lived together as couples. A number of well-known gallery artists have become directors of artist biopics and their films are considered to see what particular insights a professional working artist can bring to the portrayal of artistic genius and creation.

In the concluding part of the thesis it is argued that the artist biopic overall has survived the bad press which some individual productions have received and can even be said to have matured under the influence of directors producing a quality product for the art house, festival and avant-garde distribution circuits. As a genre it has proved extremely adaptable and has reflected the changing attitudes towards art and artists within the wider community. It has both encouraged renewed interest in the work of established national artists and also raised the profile of those relatively obscure such as Séraphine de Senlis and Pirosmani.

TITLE PAGE	1
ABSTRACT	2
CONTENTS	3-5
Chapter 1. Introduction	6-22
1.1 The artist biopic.	6
1.2 In defence of the artist biopic.	7
1.3. The question of 'historical accuracy'.	10
1.4. The question of 'reproduction of art works' – the art of display.	15
1.5. The question of 'genre'.	18
1.6. The production of the artist biopic.	19
1.7. Structure of the thesis.	21
Chapter 2. The chronology of the artist biopic: an overview	23-102
2.1. Promise unfulfilled: Alexander Korda's <i>Rembrandt</i> (1936).	23
2.2. Artist biopics in Germany and Italy during the Second World War.	30
2.3. The colour of canvas; Hollywood discovers the artist biopic.	36
2.4. The hard road to enlightenment: the artist biopic in the USSR and the German Democratic Republic 1966-1971.	53
2.5. Radical artists on a shoestring: the British artist biopic 1972-1974.	65
2.6. Across national boundaries: the rise and rise of the international artist bio-pic.	92
Chapter 3. Vincent Van Gogh	103-124
3.1. Introduction.	103
3.2. Lust for Life.	105
3.3. The 1990 centenary of Van Gogh's death: <i>Vincent and Theo</i> (1990), <i>Van Gogh</i> (1991) and <i>Dreams</i> (1990).	109
3.4. Van Gogh the time traveller: <i>Besuch bei Van Gogh</i> (Visiting van Gogh, 1985), <i>Vincent et moi</i> (Vincent and Me, 1990), <i>Starry Night</i> (1999), and <i>Full Moon Fables</i> (2003).	119
3.5. Full circle: Vincent Van Gogh as mad genius; <i>The Eyes of Van Gogh</i> (2005)	122
3.6. Conclusion.	123
Chapter 4. The British artist biopic: a hidden dose of <i>duende</i>	125-158
4.1. Origins of British artist biopics.	129
4.2. Production of British artist biopics.	134
4.3. Reception of British artist biopics.	136
4.4. Derek Jarman and Peter Greenaway.	140
4.5. A hidden dose of <i>duende</i> .	143
4.6. Conclusion.	157

Chapter 5. Female artist biopic	159-186
5.1. <i>Camille Claudel</i> .	163
5.2. Female artists and madness.	166
5.3. <i>Artemisea</i> .	169
5.4. <i>Frida</i>	174
5.5. The lesbian artist.	179
5.6. Conclusion.	185
Chapter 6. The queer artist biopic	187-206
6.1. The gay artist as victim.	187
6.2. The gay artist and 'rough trade'.	192
6.3. The gay artist's lifestyle.	193
6.4. The arrival of a queer cinema	198
6.5. The reception of the gay artist biopic.	200
6.6. Andy Warhol.	202
6.7. Conclusion.	205
Chapter 7. Gallery artists as directors of artist biopics	207-235
7.1. John Maybury.	208
7.2. Lech Majewski.	210
7.3. Peter Greenaway.	215
7.4. Joyce Wieland.	222
7.5. Charles Matton, Julian Schnabel and Derek Jarman.	231
7.6. Conclusion.	235
Chapter 8. Conclusion	236-241
APPENDICES	242-255
APPENDIX A: Chronology of production of artist biopics.	242
APPENDIX B: Table 1: Number of artist biopics produced each decade.	246
APPENDIX C: Table 2: Artist biopics by the decade according to the country with the major financial investment.	247
APPENDIX D: Artist biopics chronologically by the birth date of the subject artist, together with country of origin and date of production.	248
APPENDIX E: Artist biopics chronologically by country, according to the main financial investor.	252
APPENDIX F: German biopics of the Second World War.	254
APPENDIX G: Biopics featuring female artists.	255
LIST OF REFERENCES	256-277

BIBLIOGRAPHY	278-329
FILMOGRAPHY	330-357

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that all the material contained in this thesis is my own work.
David Allan Bovey.

Chapter 1. Introduction.

1.1. The artist biopic.

This thesis is devoted to the analysis of a sub-genre of the narrative biographical film, hereafter referred to as the 'biopic'. The biopic has been precisely defined by its pioneering historian, George F. Custen (1992:6), as simply being "minimally composed of the life, or the portion of a life, of a real person whose real name is used". The sub-genre in question is the artist biopic, which can include artists that use any medium, though in the case of narrative feature films these have so far been confined to painters, sculptors or photographers. Felleman (2006: 5) has defined the artist biopic in a very loose form as a film "wholly concerned with art, the lives of artists, and art making", which rather leaves the category too wide open. Here a compromise between the preciseness and generality between the two definitions will be used. Custen excluded *romans-à-clef* on the basis that only the use of real names suggested an openness to historical scrutiny and the film being treated seriously as an 'official' biography. However, they will be included in this thesis where the link between a fictional subject and an historical artist has been widely acknowledged. Some examples are *Life Lessons* within the portmanteau film *New York Stories* (Martin Scorsese, 1990) based on Chuck Connelly and *The Moon and Sixpence* (Albert Lewin, 1942) based on Somerset Maugham's very original portrait of the later life of Gauguin. Indeed, some fictional artists will also appear where it is felt that the films provide an important direct commentary on contemporary attitudes towards artists and their work, such as in *The Horse's Mouth* (Ronald Neame, 1958).

Only artist biopics that have obtained a theatrical release will be considered. This not only leaves a more manageable number of films to analyse but excludes those given only a very limited release in other media and the made-for television material often restricted to showing only in the country of origin, such as the Spanish *Goya* (José Ramón Larraz, 1985). Others, such as *Caravaggio* (Angelo Longoni, 2006), were produced for showing on television in some countries and for theatrical release in an abridged version in others and so have been included.

The artist biopic is at the same time a sub- genre of film within the umbrella of what can be generally labelled the 'historical film' as used in the old Hollywood studio sense (Burgoyne,

2008: 11). Any film set in the past would qualify for this label, but the grouping can be broken down further by an approach to the film's historical subject from the point of view of genre. This remains basically a successful marketing ploy so both producers and audiences are immediately aware of the kind of product they are offering or being offered. Thus a historical film might be promoted as a 'costume drama' or a 'comedy' or a 'melodrama'. The 'biopic' developed as a distinct genre in the 1930s, when first George Arliss and then Paul Muni became the definitive biopic actors. Their participation alone confirmed such films as both 'serious' and 'high art' (Custen, 1992: 60). The sub-genre of the artist biopic, however, took some time to emerge as a distinct category owing to the box-office failure of *Rembrandt* in 1936. This emergence is outlined in Chapter 2.¹

1.2. In defence of the artist biopic.

The historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. (1979:ix) notes that "Movies have had status problems ever since they emerged three quarters of a century ago as a dubious entertainment purveyed by immigrant hustlers to a working-class clientele in storefront holes-in-the-wall scattered through the poorer sections of the industrial city". While the biopic in general has had its periods of acclaim, such as the series of Great Lives directed by William Dieterle for Warner Bros in the 1930s, the artist biopic in particular has had a poor press.² It is certainly overdue for re-examination. The sub-genre has been lost in the gap between art historians who consider it too low brow and those working in cultural studies who paradoxically regard such material as too high brow and more the province of art historians. These attitudes are gradually changing. The examples of brief surveys of the field by the film critic Alexander Walker (1997) for the National Art Collection Fund and by librarians specialising in art history such as Peggy Keeran (2001) for ARLIN, in addition to John A. Walker's treatise (1993), acknowledge both its existence and its worthiness for study. Nearer the present day, the internationally renowned filmmaker and artist Peter Greenaway (2008), confirmed that he was

1 This thesis is limited to talking pictures, but Bonaud (2012) lists seven silent artist biopics.

2 An industry insider such as director Julie Taymor (2002: 9) comments "Most films on artist's lives drown in angst, grotesque behaviour and impossible suppositions on how and why the artist creates". Her own artist biopic, *Frida* (2002), was partly an attempt to rectify such criticism, as discussed in Chapter 5.4. Similarly, Robert Altman saw his *Vincent and Theo* (1990) as a new type of biopic because "I've never seen one of those biographical films that I liked, and I wanted as far as possible to work against that" (quoted in Combs, 1990: 186), and considered further in Chapter 3.3.

in future to work within what he sees as a respectable sub-genre to complete a series of films on Dutch artists. Indeed, one of the immediate questions arising from this study, and addressed below, is why it has taken so long for the sub-genre to gain some recognition considering the auteur directors who have worked within it. The list includes John Huston, Milos Forman, Vincente Minnelli, Ken Russell, Peter Watkins, Derek Jarman, Carlos Saura, Andrei Tarkovsky, Julian Schnabel, Robert Altman, Maurice Pilat, Martin Scorsese, Jacques Becker, Akira Kurosawa, and Bigas Lunas. Over a period of time the jokes made about *The Agony and the Ecstasy* (Carol Reed, 1965) or the ridicule heaped upon *Factory Girl* (George Hickenlooper, 2007) have outweighed the critical and box-office success of a film such as *Pollock* (Ed Harris, 2000) or *Frida*.³ Walker (1993:11) wrote in 1993 that “outside the context of art cinema, no film about a visual artist has been a resounding success, though several have received favourable notices and done reasonably well at the box office”. This was not entirely true even then, as, for example, *Moulin Rouge* (1952) depicting the life of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec had made so much profit that other studios were keen to try their hand at an artist biopic.

It was not until Custen (1992) analysed 300 biopics produced by the Hollywood studios between 1927 and 1960 that the biopic in general began to gain academic recognition. Custen (2000) himself brought his coverage up to 1980, by which date he felt there had been a marked decline in the status of the genre alongside that of the studio system, owing to the appearance of a glut of biographies funded for television rather than theatrical presentation. Anderson and Lupo (2002) have continued Custen's analysis up to 2000 suggesting that the genre has increased in theatrical output once again in a kind of cyclic resurgence. Continued interest in the field has manifested itself in frequent special issues of academic journals being devoted to the subject.⁴ Further book length treatments about the biopic in English did not emerge until Bingham (2010), although he only analyses one artist biopic within his case studies. He emphasises both the longevity and relevance of the genre, sustained in recent years by the deconstructionist tendencies of auteur directors working in the genre. The genre has been

3 Neale (2000: 60) comments that the biopic “has been the butt of jokes rather more often than it has been the focus of serious analysis”.

4 For example, recent publications are *a/b Auto/Biographical Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Summer 2011 on “Biopics and American National Identity” and *Networking Knowledge: Journal of the MeCCSA-PGN*, Vol. 5, July-December 2012 on “The Biographical Narrative in Popular Culture, Media and Communication”.

looked at from an international perspective in Brown's (2014) collection of edited essays, where Vidal (2014) makes a strong case for their continued contemporary relevance. Here again, only one essay directly relates to the artist biopic, where Codell (2014) revisits her earlier work on the abject artist (Codell, 2011) and adds a European perspective. Another strand of research has arisen from native interest in the large production of French biopics since 1990 (see Moine (2010) in French and (2014) in English) and particularly in special issues of *Ligeia* edited by Thivat (2007 and 2010) where, for the artist biopic, attention has been focused on the filmic depiction of the act of artistic creation. Contributors are associated with the ARIAS (Atelier de Recherche sur l'intermédialité et les arts du spectacle i.e. the Research Workshop on Intermediality and Performing Arts) research project at the CNRS (Centre national de la recherche scientifique).

Even if one accepted that the artist biopic sub-genre had no aesthetic value, which view is not supported by the evidence in this thesis, the films within it deserve analysis simply because of their potential influence on audiences. Such films generally have widespread international release whereas alternative sources of knowledge such as documentaries on artists have only small niche audiences, restricted to occasional television showings or release only on DVD. With over ninety feature films in its domain, the sub-genre's interpretations of art history have had the opportunity to greatly influence the public's perception of the artist and art itself. As the historical novelist and screenwriter George Macdonald Fraser (1988: xii) has said, "For better or worse, nothing has been more influential in shaping our vision of the past than commercial cinema". Mark C. Carnes (1996: 9) believes "For many, Hollywood History is the only history." Such influence is likely to increase rather than diminish with the explosion of media technology. Already an academic historian can report of the United States that "Our current students are clearly a film generation. Increasingly they see more films and read fewer books" (Francaviglia, 2007:vii).

This thesis aims to provide the first comprehensive single volume treatise on the sub-genre by providing both a history of its output together with overview of recurrent themes. While J. Walker's *Art and Artists on Screen* (1993) looks from its title as if it is the only existing treatise on the topic, even this is very limited in scope. Only one-third of the book covers narrative films and even then only seven of them, one foreign and six English language, are analysed,

where nearly forty had been released by this date. It, of course, only discusses films made until about 1993, so there is now another twenty years output to be considered. Survey articles, such as Dixon (1998), Robbeson (2004) and Jacobs (2011b), while full of insights, remain brief and keep retreading the same the ground over a half-dozen popular film titles. There is certainly no attempt to place the films within a framework of changes in film production and technology. However, there are many studies of individual films and directors which provide clues to developments and allow a wider view to be built up and a set of themes do emerge.

The thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach. From the perspective of film studies, questions of aesthetics will be foregrounded, leading on to analysis of the films as industrial product and then to the extent to which they reflect contemporary attitudes to key concerns such as gender. The films will also be considered as source material for art historians, standing alongside traditional written materials as an additional resource. However, there are several recurrent problems that need to be addressed from the start as they impinge on all the issues to be discussed.

1.3. The question of 'historical accuracy'.

Toplin (1996: ix) has pointed out that in discussing any films that deal with specific personalities and events, including the artist biopic, because the content implies a level of authenticity and an approximation to reality, one is inevitably drawn into a debate about the treatment of history. Hughes-Warrington (2007: 6) has identified that there are now well over one thousand publications discussing historical films. While not attempting to paraphrase the whole debate on the relations between history and film, a summary of where this study stands on this relationship and the way it has influenced its theoretical frameworks is essential. As Landy (2001b:12) has rightly concluded,

"The media critic cannot merely overlook the elimination of certain data [in historical films], the distortion of certain characters, and the mingling of fact and fiction; a critic writing about history in film must find a method for describing and analysing these departures from empirical data...In place of the standards of judgement about 'truth' and 'falsehood', the critic- whether specialised film scholar or historian- has to develop new ways of thinking".

There needs to be found a way of analysing the historical film that meets the needs of both historians and film scholars, bringing two very different approaches together and my solution is outlined on pages 13-14.

Films are made primarily for entertainment, for profit and for aesthetic reasons. The views and intentions of the art historian are far from the concerns of producers setting up a financial deal. The pattern of invention and falsifying of facts in historical films was there right from the beginning of mainstream cinema. By 1937 Frank S. Nugent, the film critic of the New York Times, claimed that Warners, with its series of biographies directed by Dieterle, "have achieved the reputation of being Hollywood's foremost triflers with history" (quoted in Gustafson, 1977:51). Irving Thalberg, MGM mogul, is quoted as saying "if in telling a story we find it impossible to adhere to historical accuracy in order to get the necessary dramatic effect, we do change it and we do feel it is the right thing to do" (quoted in Leab, 1990:83). This pervading view is corroborated by Darryll F. Zanuck, from 20th Century Fox studios, who insisted that "All cinematic lives had to be understandable in terms that viewers would find congruent with their own experiences" (Custen, 1992: 20).

A series of practices have been used in developing historical films, particularly Hollywood studio films, that have led many to question their being taken at all seriously as historical sources, or even worth viewing at all. The artist biopic is not immune from these prejudices. In its concern with providing a strong storyline to interest audiences, Hollywood frequently simplifies events and relationships to provide a clear, completed and closed narrative. Events may be excluded and time scales elided. Several historical figures are often merged into one composite. The actions of an individual are given prominence over those of a group, in order to make events more understandable and more immediate, which also transforms complex solutions of large social and political issues into a resolution of personal problems. Herlihy (1988:1187-1190) emphasises that the viewer is made an eyewitness to events portrayed on the screen, with all events, even those shown in flashback, taking place in the 'present' tense, i.e. what is actually appearing before the camera lens. The film continues to project at twenty-

four frames a second and cannot be stopped to examine its detail or to clarify a point⁵. The screen must be filled. There can be no indecision about the recreation of a historical period. The spectator would expect to see a nineteenth century artist's studio filled with appropriate tools of the trade and furnishings, without gaps where the art director is uncertain what to put in place or has been unable to obtain a desired item. A definite decision has to be made as to what is appropriate for the time period or such concern for accurate recreation of detail simply be ignored and the film company may have to simply put in place just what they have available that looks vaguely old-fashioned. At the same time the constant forward motion of the narration can also make any conflicting motivations for actions difficult to introduce in such viewing conditions. This can sometimes produce a rather one-dimensional storyline giving a stark 'black' or 'white' exposition of events lacking any subtlety.

What can be offered on a 'plus' side is more emotive. A film can give the look of the past, whether of buildings, landscapes, costumes, artefacts or even customs. A sense of immediacy is evoked that the spectator is really there. Several critics (e.g. Nathan, 2007 and Chopra-Gant, 2008: 78-87) have examined the films of director Martin Scorsese based in the nineteenth century and praised such features. For example, Desson Howe (1993:N52) said of *The Age of Innocence* (1993) "You feel what it is like to live in this world", and Stephen Hunter (2002: C1) considered that *The Gangs of New York* (2002) "has the genius of **thereness** to it". However, it has been argued by Seymour Chapman (1980: 125-26), this quality can equally mean the historical film is overloaded with information. What is a single shot in a film can be so complex as to require several pages of description, let alone the analysis of a whole film sequence. As Rosenstone (1988:1177) suggests "The huge images on the screen and the wraparound sounds overwhelm us, swamp our senses, and destroy attempts to remain aloof, distanced, critical. In the movie theatre, we are, for a time, prisoners of history". Such recreations may be satisfying while the viewer is in the cinema but they are not necessarily accurate. Again taking *The Gangs of New York*, Scorsese himself has said it is only "a kind of artistic interpretation" of events as

5 Rosenstone (1995:9) describes it as "a relentless medium that will not pause for a question until its tale is told."

“the film laces history with poetic fire” being “visceral not veracious” (quoted in Travers 2003:101).⁶

The thesis reflects that there is the opportunity not only to recreate a physical environment but also an emotional one, which is often vital to an understanding of the artistic temperament, and what Schlesinger (1979:xii) would describe as a key to the “inner life” of a nation. Francaviglia (2007:vii) approves of a film’s power to create emotions such as elation, anger, despair, grief, and fear. In dealing with biography these emotions are important to understanding the behaviour of individuals. The cinema has at its disposal its own special language composed of techniques such as the close-up or editing which particularly lend themselves to creating powerful emotional effects. As Gustafson (1977:49) suggests what “movies have done better than anything else, they gave to millions of viewers the presence and vividness of history far beyond the influence of Gibbon or Prescott.”⁷

What appears to be happening at the beginning of the twenty-first century is that questions of ‘accuracy’ and ‘emotion’ seem to be bothering historians, including art historians, less. Films are accepted as just one additional contribution to the types of sources available to the modern historian, neither replacing nor supplementing written history but standing alongside it. For example, Nathan (2007: 92) is happy that in fact some artistic licence may very well encourage filmmakers to innovation and liveliness. The penalty of minor revisions to the traditional art historian’s palette is worth it for the empathy brought to the subject and the motivation a film brings to a percentage of its audience outside of the cinema to discover more about the historical figure in the camera’s lens⁸. Obviously there must be limits on what deviations from ‘accuracy’ are condonable. Rollins (2007:8) would condone filmmakers’ decisions to alter familiar facts as long as they are done in “the name of truth”; and Fraser

6 While the visuals in cinema dominate, as Fraser (1988:xiv) suggests, “Getting it visually right is one thing; it must also sound right, and historical films abound with instances when it didn’t.”

7 Historians themselves can become very emotional when writing on this immediacy. For example, Rosenstone (1995: 236) talks of “the past did not just mean – it sounded and looked and moved as well. A sunset may not be part of history, but sunsets have had meaning for people; they have soothed hearts, raised hopes, calmed fears. Surely this is part of history.”

8 Fraser (1988: xviii) is convinced “There is something else that the costume picture has done. I have lived long enough in the world of historical fiction to know how strongly it can work in turning readers to historical fact. Hollywood, by providing splendid entertainment has sent people to the history shelves in their millions”. The historian Toplin (2007: 7) agrees as “Hollywood movies do not bring closure to discussions about history” but “they do have the potential to open them”.

(1988: xv) considers the practice acceptable: "For me, provided he [the writer, director, or producer] does not break faith with the spirit of history by wilful misrepresentation or hatchet job, he may take liberties with the letter- but he should take as few as possible."

In practice this has meant a painstaking analysis by a case study approach to each artist biopic is essential to consider its virtues and vices. As well as an examination of the text on-screen providing both surface and deeper meanings and an appreciation of the film's aesthetic values, there will be reference to a film's promotion and reception, to its intentions and impact as well as its content. Following Toplin (1996: xi) the thesis explores both **behind** and **around** each artist biopic. Behind the film lies the director, long seen as of potential importance as an auteur. However, the producer and/or writer can be of equal importance, often initiating film projects. Also stars have often taken on artist biopics as personal projects and brought their own iconic image to the role. Each of these contributors will bring their own view of history, of how far historical evidence would be used. The thesis discusses, for example, whether they were influenced to adjust their portrayals by outside pressures: whether they were reacting to mainstream or dissident beliefs of the times; whether they were in agreement with each other on the approach to be taken; as to how far can they be said to have presented the biography with historical integrity and to what extent was the film packaged within a film genre; and what is the source of finance? Then each film chosen for analysis has to be placed in context, both within the social and political issues of the day and also in how far the past can provide lessons for the present. The French film historians Sorlin (1980) and Ferro (1988) both consider a historical film is only of value in so far as it reflects the general consensus of the period when it was shot, not of the era depicted. Having said this, O'Connor (1979b: xx) would impose the proviso that "In most cases it is impossible to discover whether films served more to shape popular attitudes or to reflect them". There will also be consideration of what the critics, filmmakers and the public thought of the film's historical interpretation, whether the film provoked any argument and if the filmmakers defended their position?

The distrust of the historical film, and by implication the artist biopic, has always been focused on the Hollywood movie, especially those of the studio era. Rosenstone (1995: 12) makes a case for what he calls a "postmodern history film", largely coterminous with the rise of the 'independent' film. This has the potential to create a new type of historical film, which

because its main characteristic is that it foregrounds its construction, will allow a more realistic recreation of the past. Such structure makes it more suitable to cope with multiple meanings owing to a complex inter-relationship of image sound and language, even written text, which potentially offers a new and more complex type of history compared to written and oral standards⁹. Other historians, such as Francaviglia (2007: vii), also emphasise this **potential** in film, which has still not been fully realised. Film director Oliver Stone has described himself as a “cinematic historian” (quoted in Toplin, 1996: viii), to cover his approach to biographies such as *JFK* (1991) and *Nixon* (1995)¹⁰. Perhaps this usage could rather clumsily be extended to cover the work of Peter Greenaway on *Nightwatching* (2007) as a “cinematic art historian”. In Chapter 1 the rise of both the independent and art house film will be assessed and new approaches to art history within the artist biopic will be examined.

1.4. The question of ‘reproduction of art works’ – the art of display.

The crucial additional feature within artist biopics compared to the standard biopic is, of course, the works of art themselves. In general terms the artist needs to be shown at work to emphasise their creative genius and the audience is provided with examples of completed works to justify the individual being worthy of a biopic. However, to what degree these features are provided and the methods used to convey them can be problematic. As Critic Margaret Hinxman (1974) in reviewing *Pirosmani* (1971) commented, “Films about painters seldom impress. The moving pictures get in the way of the works of art: the one in a sense, being a negation of the other”. The thesis will show both examples where this criticism is valid and cases where new approaches have overcome such limitations and the display of art adds to the effectiveness of the film.

9 “Such works do not, like the dramatic feature or the documentary attempt to recreate the past realistically. Instead they point to it and play with it, raising questions about the very evidence on which our knowledge of the past depends, creatively interacting with its traces” (Rosenstone, 1995: 12).

10 Toplin (1996: viii) approves of such work, proclaiming “These cinematic historians have become powerful storytellers. They are competing effectively with the schoolteacher, the college professor, and the history book author. Their work deserves attention.”

Just placing a film camera in front of a painting or sculpture secures a reproduction of sorts, but even this is open to question, and not the basic standard it would appear, as what is in essence a single stationary frame is now being shown at a running speed of twenty-four frames a second.¹¹ Bazin (2005a: 165) pointed out that “space, as it applies to a painting, is radically destroyed by the screen”. The work of art may not fit the shape of the projection ratio in use and so only part of it can be shown at a time, with either a section cut off or, perhaps a close-up on part of it. In close up the framed section in effect becomes a new work of art in its own right as the audience is used to viewing what is in the frame as the subject under discussion. If a pan of the work is used the motion of the camera provides the viewer with a different sense of looking at the object to a still reproduction, as the parts shown separately still have to be fitted, like a jigsaw, by the viewer into their interpretation of the whole. A camera movement around say a sculpture to show all its planes may in fact reveal more of the work of art than a viewer would obtain in a gallery. The movement itself, however can be off-putting and the inclusion of physical surroundings and other objects nearby as the circling is made can be equally distracting. As Tashiro (1996: 20) points out, while the projection of the image of the work of art continues, the insertion of a reproduction or even the evocation of an original painting breaks the flow of the narrative and becomes a very self-conscious mechanism. How this effect is overcome or exploited will be returned to throughout the analysis of specific films, such as *Andrei Rublev* (1966) in Chapter 2.4. or *A Bigger Splash* (1974) in Chapter 2.5.

Many other decisions have to be made by the film team to ensure the results they want. For many years there was the fundamental choice of whether the whole film would be made in colour or in black and white. If in black and white how can, in particular, a painting’s value be shown? Is the main section of the film to be in black and white but a section of it given over to colour reproductions, as in *Andrei Rublev*? (see Chapter 2.4). If in colour how far can the particular colour process used successfully reproduce the hues and tints of that artist’s work, as in *Moulin Rouge* (John Huston, 1952)? (see Chapter 2.3). Whatever is done the fact is that

11 Bazin (2005a: 165), as so often, put the problem very succinctly when he said “the sequence of a film gives it a unity in time that is horizontal and, so to speak, geographical, whereas time in painting...develops geologically and in depth”.

viewing a painting on the screen and in the flesh are two very different experiences. There are always going to be changes in the colour, scale and texture from the original artwork.

Large-scale projection of a work of art on a cinema screen may result in many imperfections in the work being made visible. Time can cause cracks in the oil paint or a fresco may have flaked off or faded. For example, when preparing *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, although the Vatican gave permission for filming the original ceiling by Michelangelo within the Sistine Chapel, it proved unfeasible as the close-ups on the CinemaScope screen showed large fissures and uneven colour areas in what was supposed to be newly completed work (Wapshott, 1990: 320) (see Chapter 2.3).

Producers also frequently find that the preferred required works of wanted for reproduction are in fact restricted for use under copyright restrictions or objections by the estate of the artist. In the case of the works of Francis Bacon and their potential use in *Love is the Devil* (1998) his estate went beyond simply refusing any reproduction of his artistic output and insisted on prohibiting any verbatim quotes from his surviving spoken words (Kalin, 1998:61) (see Chapters 4 and 7.1).

As well as reproducing works of art, some filmmakers have opted to recreate how the artist viewed the world via the design of the *mise-en-scène*. The artist becomes the production designer of his or her biopic. The world in which the artist lives and works is shown in the style of their paintings. Kracauer (1960: 199-200) has dubbed this a “documentary tendency” where “films on art which follow the documentary tendency do not isolate the world of art and feature it as an autonomous entity; rather, in keeping with the medium’s affinity for natural material they try to make the work appear as an element of actuality”. This is in fact a reversal of the artist’s original intention to turn three dimensional figures into two dimensional images (Walker, 1993: 34). For example, in *Moulin Rouge* John Huston turns two dimensional images back into three dimensional by animating Toulouse- Lautrec’s characters from drawings, posters and illustrations (see Chapter 2.3). Such techniques need to be used cautiously as they can readily diminish the implied status of the artist as a ‘genius’ if all he is seen to do in his art is to reproduce what is already on view on the screen rather to create something unique by interpreting the real world into a new vision in only two dimensions (Tashiro, 1996:28).

However, it can work to the advantage of the film, as is true of *Moulin Rouge*, where the recreated world works well for the first twenty minutes of the film which is set inside the Moulin Rouge itself and directly inspired by Lautrec's work. However, once this inspiration is removed when the film moves to the outside world which is not directly depicted from Lautrec's own work and rather reflects the imagination of the art director's department, the film is more conventional and becomes less interesting (Dryer, 1970: 197). This topic will be developed in Chapters 2 and 3.

1.5. The question of 'genre'.

The biography of the artist has a long written tradition since Vasari's *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects* (1550) and within which has grown up a pattern of myths and clichés. The film world has remained uninterested in the lives of healthy, sober, respectable, God fearing artists of the kind considered most suitable for young ladies in the Victorian era (Gaertner, 1970:29). Alexander Walker (1997: 53) has emphasised that filmmakers have concentrated on the wild and bohemian, because these produce the best profits for when disguised under the banner of 'high culture' the filmmaker can 'get away' with showing more salacious material than that condoned under the general level of permissiveness within the industry at a particular time.

Several distinct patterns in artistic biography have been identified by Gaertner (1970: 27-28)) within the literature and these in turn are replicated within the filmed genre. There is therefore a danger in the films as well as in the literature that what is being reproduced is a standard life pattern rather than an actual one. The life is being amended and distorted, not only within the production limitations already outlined in Section 1.3., but also to fit a predetermined pattern that has been acceptable to and successful with audiences in the past.

The standard filmed life of the artist centres on the 'Bohemian artist'. These are young, struggling, starving, arrogant, amorous and generous to their own kind and those worse off than themselves. There is a strong opposition to society generally and officialdom in particular which gives a sense of alienation while intellectual and artistic freedom is given full reign (Modigliani). This scenario greatly appeals to filmmakers because such representation valorises

the auteur figure, who may also produce great works of cinematic art while suffering extreme industrial and social pressures (Hayward, 1998b: 10). There are obvious parallels between subject and filmmaker in a number of films under scrutiny in this thesis, such as Derek Jarman's *Caravaggio* (1986), Peter Greenaway's *Nightwatching* and Ken Russell's *Savage Messiah* (1972), which will be followed up in Chapters 2, 4 and 7. The bohemian artists are often sex-obsessed or an erotic superman (and it is usually a man, for example Norman Lindsay).

Closely linked to the 'Bohemian', owing to the stresses and strains of the lifestyle, is the 'mad artist' or 'mad genius', where in popular parlance the two qualities are equated and where Griselda Pollock (1980: 133-136) has investigated the phenomenon in relation to Van Gogh in *Lust for Life* (1956) (see Chapter 3.2.). Some artists may only exhibit eccentricities and be simply labelled as 'odd' (Munch, El Greco). Also such a fast life can bring about the 'sick' artist's illness, which can arise from any combination of disease, alcohol or drugs (Toulouse-Lautrec). Mental problems can result in a 'suicidal' artist (Van Gogh). Then the cinema has more recently investigated what sociologists would term those with "deviant behaviour patterns" (Gaertner, 1970: 28), the 'decadent artist' (Klimt) and the 'gay artist' (Bacon, Warhol)', the latter discussed in Chapter 6. Such categorisation has even been attributed backwards to historical existences (Michelangelo, Caravaggio). The validity of some of these claims will also be examined in Chapter 6. In all these categories there can be examples of an artist dying young, usually with forebodings of the tragedy, so robbing the world of their potential output (Gaudier-Brzaska, Pollock).

1.6. The production of the artist biopic.

Just how many films can be referred to within this study soon becomes of importance. A mere catalogue of relevant films is to be avoided while it would equally be impossible in the space available to analyse each in detail. The analogy used by Hughes-Warrington (2007: 7-8) provides a useful solution here. As when using maps, the scale can be switched from large to small as needs be, to either take an overview of an area or to zoom in on some important detail, so the degree of analysis of chosen films has been adjusted to the themes of each chapter. For example, using an overview of industry developments in Chapter 2 hopefully helps to bring out the trends and themes over time; while, in contrast, a close-up of several key films centring on a particular painter in Chapter 2 allows the investigation of points arising in depth.

Custen (1992:235) discovered two-hundred and ninety-one biopics from major American studios and independent production companies in the period 1927-1960 and subsequently undertook a coding exercise in detail on a sample of 100 of these. Similarly the number of artist biopics has reached a sufficient critical size that makes their analysis a viable subject study. This thesis has identified eighty-nine artist biopics from Western Europe and North America, of which twenty-five were unavailable for viewing; although even for these, short extracts of very variable length and picture quality were generally available on the internet, sufficient to give a flavour of the original film. The rest were viewed for analysis on a monitor from videotape, DVD or Blu-Ray copies. Of these eight were also viewed in a cinema on a full screen, but the absence of this provision shows that the genre generally does not often feature in repertory revivals or 'classic film' seasons at the art-house cinemas. The release period for new films that reach the cinemas has been shortened, making it more difficult to view a film before it is only available on DVD or Blu-ray. Indeed, many now have merely token releases for some publicity before being offered for sale in other media. Video copies did at least encourage the provision of 'letterbox' ratio versions as standard, giving a reproduction close to the original cinematic ratio rather than a cropped academy ratio version only suited to the TV screen. What on video was largely restricted to 'Director's Cut' editions has become more standard on DVD and 'extras' tend to abound on Blu-Ray. The new technologies of large screen flat televisions and High Definition Blu-ray discs or HD digital broadcasts and downloads offer the possibility of reproduction of details, colour and sound equal to projected 35mm quality within the home. Such possibilities obviously gain significance when examining films about artists and their work.

In addition to the eighty-nine artist biopics produced in the western cinema industries a further twenty-six films relating to fictional artists, romans-a-clef, and a few non-western titles have been included for comparative purposes. These are all listed chronologically in Appendix A.

The production of artist biopics has not been a constant. The numbers released for theatrical distribution has risen greatly in the last two decades, as is shown in Appendix B. The indications are that this level will be sustained in the 2010s. The increase in production follows

the growth in the production of bio-pics generally. It also coincides with the rise of what Sicinski (2012: 377) has termed “the new biopic”. These are films which “have achieved ascendancy because they trade in a safe, cozy, and false one-to-one correspondence model of artistic creation”. However, for the artist biopic it will be seen that there is a more dynamic scene throughout, with less reliance on tropes and clichés, with a more radical approach to material and this will be highlighted particularly in Chapter 7.

The origins of artist biopics by country, as defined by the main source of finance rather than creative input, has changed little from decade to decade, as shown in Appendix C. Overall the Anglo-Saxon world predominates, with Spain and France being more prolific in the 1990s, as is the USA in the 2000s. The coverage of artists by their date of birth is provided in Appendix D. There is only one pre-fifteenth-century. There are five in the fifteenth-century, six in the sixteenth-century, four in the seventeenth-century, four in the eighteenth-century, twenty-eight in the nineteenth-century, with an emphasis on the second half and leading into the twentieth, and thirteen born in the twentieth-century.

From the same list it can be seen that there have been two films about El Greco, Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Camille Claudel, Modigliani, the Krøyers, Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, Dalí, Camille Claudel, Edvard Munch and Klimt and three films about Cellini, Caravaggio, Warhol and Picasso. The most popular subjects have been Rembrandt and Van Gogh with five films each and Goya with six. It is interesting how many of these films are made outside of the country of origin of the subject artist, enshrining the international appeal of persistent themes and virtues.

1.7. Structure of the thesis.

Chapter 1 will provide some of the contextualising information mentioned in Section 0.3. via a chronological overview of why and how the artist biopic films were made. In particular, any indications of a ‘development’ over the eighty years of production, as against a mere ‘unfolding’ will be examined. With so many films to incorporate in Chapter 2, in contrast there will be an opportunity to examine a handful of them in detail within two case studies in the next two chapters. Chapter 3 will focus on the nineteenth century painter Vincent Van Gogh

and look at eight films about his life, where Van Gogh is the main character in all the films. Chapter 4 focuses on how far the artist biopic output of the United Kingdom relates to the concept of a national cinema, especially in an era of growing multinational production. For Chapter 5, under the heading of sexuality, there will be an examination of the artist biopics where women artists are the main subject. In Chapter 6 the presentation of the queer artist is evaluated. In Chapter 7 there is a discussion of the five films whose director is also a practising artist in their own right, with the intention of discovering in to what extent an artist at the helm provides a different approach to an artist's biography.

Chapter 2. The chronology of the artist biopic: an overview

2.1. Promise unfulfilled: Alexander Korda's *Rembrandt* (1936)

The first serious artist bio-pic of the sound era is Korda's *Rembrandt* (1936), although *The Affairs of Cellini* (La Cava) appeared in 1934. La Cava's film was based on a 1924 play, *The Firebrand* by Edwin Justus Mayer, and was very similar to the 'private lives' of the (in)famous series of films that Korda had produced and directed. It used the trimmings of association with high art to basically sell and make palatable an amoral sequence of partner swapping between Cellini and the Duke, his patron, to which was added a large dose of French farce with garden shrubbery standing in for the bedroom doors of the more traditional location.¹² The film is interesting in the present context only to reinforce the assumption of immorality and sexual licence being freely associated, and acceptable, within the artistic life, particularly of a far away historical period.

Alexander Korda needed a grand production to inaugurate his new London Films studio at Denham, Buckinghamshire (Drazin, 2002: 127). The success of his own biographical films made in England and those of the Hollywood studios, suggested a choice of an artist biopic as a logical extension of the range. Korda was also looking for a 'star vehicle' for Charles Laughton, who had made such an impression in *The Private Life of Henry VIII*.¹³

Korda also wanted to extend his public reputation for being cultured as well as a successful businessman and filmmaker. *Rembrandt* was initially publicised as the first in a

¹² The play was very successful with its performing edition being republished as late as 1936. Influential New York theatre critic Burns Mantle placed it in his top ten productions of 1924, alongside Eugene O' Neill's *Desire Under the Elms*. In 1945 it even formed the book for a Broadway operetta *The Firebrand of Florence* with music by Kurt Weill and lyrics by Ira Gershwin, though the production only lasted for 43 performances (Weill, 2002: Vol 3, pp. 13, 17). Mayer, who wrote the book for the show, went on to become a screenwriter, his most famous script being for *To Be or Not to Be* (Lubitsch, 1942).

¹³ Several subjects were considered with Laughton in mind. Firstly Beethoven (Higham, 1976:69), then *Cyrano de Bergerac*, which was dismissed when the scriptwriters could not cope with the poetic dialogue (Hesling, 2007: 77). Vincent Korda suggested Toulouse Lautrec but the brothers could not see Laughton coping with performing on his knees (Korda, 1980: 113). Finally, it was Carl Zuckmayer, who was to write the first script treatment, who suggested Rembrandt (Hesling, 2007: 80). This was very apt as Korda firmly believed that film biographies should always be both written and directed by foreigners because outsiders could more easily recognise national stereotypes suitable for international exhibition (Hesling, 2007: 79).

series of artist bio-pics from London Films (Higham, 1976: 68). Both Korda and Laughton were avid art collectors and they embarked on a joint venture to read and learn everything they could about Rembrandt to ensure the accuracy and correct feel to the eventual film.¹⁴ Laughton insisted on travelling to view in person all 64 extant self portraits by Rembrandt.¹⁵ While Laughton was the keenest researcher (Kulik, 1975: 155), the rest of the crew were also involved. Vincent Korda studied Dutch interiors for his sets. John Armstrong scoured contemporary records and museum collections for his costume designs. Muir Mathieson unearthed a number of Dutch folk songs for his score (Tabori, 1959: 163).

Although such care and effort were exerted to place an accurate setting on screen, the film was not a critical or box-office success and Korda quietly dropped any intention of developing such subjects into a series.¹⁶ This public failure of a costly prestige production intended for the international market held back the making of more artist bio-pics until their revival as propaganda tools during the Second World War. The British box-office was only £34,140 or roughly twenty-five percent of its costs. It is clear that London Films could never hope to recover its production costs of its lavish productions from domestic sales. Obviously, penetration of foreign markets, particularly the USA, was essential for the success of bigger budget films. Korda at least had the opportunity to benefit from this as his tie-in with United Artists gave access to North American cinemas (Sedgwick, 2000: 233-234). An analysis of the film's trailer helps provide an answer as to why the film was a failure in both artistic and financial terms.

14 Laughton was guided by Dr Albert Barnes of New York to buy Renoir's *Judgement of Paris* in 1935 for thirty-six thousand dollars, to be the centrepiece of his collection, although he was predominantly interested in abstract and naive art (Callow, 1987: 105). Laughton was also an expert flower arranger and would argue for hours with his close friend Constance Spry over delicate positioning. He asked his wife, Elsa Lanchester, to take credit for it publicly, in the same manner as her presence shielded his homosexuality from the public (Callow, 1987: 104). Korda's personal collection included works by Van Gogh, Cézanne, Utrillo, Maillol, Degas, Gauguin, Renoir, Bonnard and Soutine (Kulik, 1975: 153 and Hesling, 2007: 80).

15 Laughton's diligence paid off in that he discovered that Rembrandt's right eye was smaller than his left. He then experimented with his make-up to ensure accurate reproduction of this 'mismatch' effect in the film (Tabori, 1959: 163). Considering his dedication to studying the self-portraits, it seems suitably ironic that the final title used in the film's trailer reads that "Charles Laughton paints the greatest screen portrait of his career as Rembrandt". Laughton even learnt to paint, taking lessons from Vincent Korda and John Armstrong, so that his use of brushes and paint would look authentic on screen (Korda, 1980: 114 and Higham, 1976: 70).

16 The film's budget was £112,200, though it actually cost £142,888. First-run box-office receipts only amounted to £92,168 (Drazin, 2002: 149, 153).

The first section of *Rembrandt's* trailer focuses on the presence of Charles Laughton. After his Oscar rewarded success in *The Private Life of Henry the Eighth* and subsequent Hollywood leading roles, he is considered the most potent selling point in the film. The first title displayed refers to "The supreme artist of the screen", not a reference to Rembrandt, but to Laughton. Then Rembrandt is mentioned, secondly, as "The immortal painter", his profession reinforced in shorthand form by Laughton's hand placing his signature and the date 1642 on a canvas. There is then a cut to the unveiling of the large scale *The Nightwatch* painting, not titled, so it can be assumed that this painting is of sufficient cultural fame to be instantly recognised by a fair proportion of the cinema going audience. The elements of spectacle, high art and star power have all been introduced. These elements are all subsequently repeated and joined by ribaldry and earthiness as Rembrandt kisses a serving wench in a tavern and provokes a brawl. There is titillation as Hendrijke is asked to "Take off that shawl" as if it is a prelude to on-screen seduction. There is the suggestion of high intrigue as Geertje whispers to Fabrizius and is interrupted by a woman's piercing scream. The audience is drawn into the past as a familiar landscape by the frequent inclusion of typical Dutch picture postcard scenes, usually including a prominent windmill and/or picturesque lock-gate, accompanied by loud sweeping music or used as a backcloth for the interspersed titles, such as "The loves of a master brought to life".

On first acquaintance with the trailer all seems well. Korda appears to be peddling the film using all the time-tested qualities to encourage an audience to see an historical bio-pic, especially visual pleasures, but also an empathy with the characters and a link with the historical heritage plus a strong link with love and sex (Harper, 1992: 106).¹⁷ However, the characteristics of a successful box-office bio-pic are not so apparent in the full-length film. The trailer quite blatantly cheats and someone attending the film based on seeing the trailer could be very disappointed. The trailer was an attempt by Korda to lure the paying public in. Kulik (1975: 154) records how Korda was warned that his serious approach to the film and its elliptical narrative would be box-office poison, but his feeling for the subject led him to override his usual formula for successful international filmmaking simply because he sincerely believed the film to be "very beautiful" (Tabori,

17 This could be a trailer for a film equally likely to be entitled *The Private Life of Rembrandt*.

1959: 165). The anecdotal irony and satire of his 'private life' films is replaced by a seriousness of purpose. In, say, *The Private Life of Henry the Eighth*, it is the man, not the King, who is the real subject, so in *Rembrandt* it is the man rather than the painter, but now a very serious portrayal, concentrating on showing Rembrandt's inner development rather than his external world. Rembrandt's succession of romantic partners is not flouted for titillating purposes, but reflects his complex personal relationships that directly affect this art.¹⁸ This seriousness has still been criticised for lacking any socio-political context, the setting and references remaining within the confines of a stereotype of representation of typical popular Dutch landscape and interior painting (Hesling, 2007: 79). While Korda may have had a relatively high opinion of his audience compared to that he had seen exhibited by the studios in Hollywood, maintaining that the audience for his films "want their entertainment to be both progressive and cultured" (cited in Harper, 1992, 106), he still tried to keep his historical films rooted in popular history that would be immediately accessible.¹⁹

Both Korda and Laughton were interested in exploring the man behind the paintings as both to some extent saw themselves reflected in his story, as an idealised portrait of themselves. In particular, Laughton wanted to emphasise the love of beauty, a sense of humanity and an integrity in artistic inspiration which allowed no compromise (Callow, 1987: 107), together with the self doubt and burden of artistic inspiration he felt went along with these traits in his own work and life (Higham, 1976: 69). In fact, as Drazin (2002: 152) suggests, "*Rembrandt* depicts the struggle that any artist, writer, actor and – perhaps above all- filmmaker must face. The film as both allegorical and deeply personal". This is to become a characteristic attraction of the artist bio-pic as a genre for both film directors and actors.

18 Hesling (2007: 93) points out that Korda working in England, and also having foreign origins, could be much more candid about Rembrandt's extra-marital affairs than either the art historical studies or novelisations appearing on the continent. He was not under pressure to maintain a flawless image of a Dutch national hero.

19 Korda was always aware of the need to win over an audience by appealing to some basic instincts. Even at the London premiere of *Rembrandt* on the 6th November 1936, to launch a serious biopic, the opening item on the programme was Walt Disney's *Mickey's Elephant* (BFI Library Press Cuttings Collection).

Due to the director and star being interested in emphasising specific aspects of Rembrandt's personality, it was decided to focus the film on his life from 1642 onwards when he refused to let his financial and personal difficulties interfere with his artistic vision. He personifies the artist as 'the misunderstood genius', condemned to isolation and suffering because he is ahead of his time. All his agonies are sublimated into his art. His painting develops from an 'external' to a 'subjective' mode with a new focus on the intense pursuit of the representation of his inner life (Hesling, 2007: 83, 96). While this still enabled his life to be depicted as revolving around his relationship with three women, it also meant that it did not follow what Landy (1991: 75) calls "the organic biographical model". This biographical film formula encompassed the stages of early struggles, success, a dizzying fall from grace (usually accompanied by physical excesses), followed by a triumphant restoration of reputation and fortune. *Rembrandt* only locks in to the third part of this pattern. The audience sees nothing of the early struggles and success. The film is one long, and slowly paced, firstly financial, and then also physical, decline. There is nothing to raise the spirits as Saskia and Hendrikje die, Geertje rants and raves at Rembrandt's unworldliness, his reputation is destroyed and he becomes a decrepit old man alone in a garret studio.²⁰ The great Ur-myth of the life of the bohemian artist as promulgated in art historical discourse is not fully realised and the audience was dissatisfied. Also many of the dramatic moments depicted are treated in a restrained manner. For example, the audience never sees Saskia's face and when she dies Rembrandt calmly and quietly simply paints an imaginary portrait of her. This deliberate avoidance of hints of melodrama also leads to a feeling of coldness and uninvolvedness with the characters in the film (Hesling, 2007: 89), so the film lacks the expected vibrancy and drama. Even the treatment of the sexual licence of artistic bohemia is ambiguous. Rembrandt's two great muses Saskia and Hendrikje obviously endlessly stimulate his creative imagination but are not necessarily seen as sexual objects.²¹

20 This is so even though the many unpleasant aspects to Rembrandt's character, such as selling his first wife's burial plot, are ignored in the screenplay. Korda and Laughton strongly disagreed on this point. Laughton went public in protesting at what he considered was the sentimentalising of the character (Callow, 1987: 109) and that it prevented the film from achieving "true greatness" (Tabori, 1959: 164).

21 Rembrandt very gently and deliberately tells Hendrikje that "I'm not looking at you as a man looks. I'm a painter. Painters have a different way of looking at things" (cited in Hesling, 2007: 90).

The film failed to find an audience, despite a triumphant opening in Holland (Kulik, 1975: 158). For example, Graham Greene reviewing it in *The Spectator* found it both slow and pompous (cited in Drazin, 2002: 157).²² While Laughton's monologues provided him with a remarkable acting opportunity they also broke up any narrative drive the film had built up (Burrows, 1969: 12). This was little enough in any case as it was a series of vignettes, in the form of a loose sequence of tableaux vivants, largely based around Rembrandt's relations with women. The narrative structure was very loose for although the jumps in time were chronological they were not regular but unequal and no steady rhythm in unfolding the story was built up which leaves the story rather in a vacuum and gives undue prominence to the vision of Rembrandt's physical aging as the only way to judge the passing of time. While many bio-pics had an ending in the minor key,²³ *Rembrandt* plays in this key throughout. This is reflected in the choice of material the audience is shown Rembrandt creating. The film begins with the full worldliness of *The Nightwatch* painted in a luxurious studio. In mid-point is shown the painting of King Saul, in a transition from the material to the spiritual world as David plays music to sooth Saul's tormented soul. By the end of the film Rembrandt is only painting himself within a tiny garret studio, completely oblivious of the external world (Drazin, 2002: 152).

Technically the camera angles were conservative, as Korda eschewed any moves away from natural eyelevel. (Korda, 1980: 103). However, Vincent Korda in the sets and Georges Périnal with the camera used the black and white photography to replicate as far as they could in domestic scenes, Rembrandt's skill in chiaroscuro. Korda ambitiously wanted to 'paint with light' what Rembrandt had painted with brush and palette (Tabori, 1959: 164). While Périnal was limited by the lenses available at the time (Petrie, 1996: 133), Kulik (1975: 155) heaps high praise on him for "capturing the particular 'north light' which illuminated Rembrandt's studio and his paintings, creating pictorial compositions which seem – in gesture, lighting and physical arrangement – to be examples of Rembrandt's own paintings come to life on celluloid". This continuous sense of watching a Dutch old master come to life was doubly important as Korda had decided to forgo

22 Much of this feeling could be ascribed to the film including three long monologues for Laughton reading from the Bible, particularly from *Ecclesiastes* 1:2 and 111:22, "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity...A man shall rejoice in his own works".

23 E.g. *Abraham Lincoln* (D. W. Griffith, 1930) or *Mata Hari* (George Fitzmaurice, 1931).

showing Rembrandt's actual paintings. It was felt that there was too much discrepancy in Laughton's appearance with the self-portraits to move easily from one to the other. However, this simply put up a different barrier between film and audience as the spectator was frustratingly shown the backs of canvases being painted but never the actual work. Laughton's laudable efforts to paint correctly were confined to how his brush moved back and forth to the canvas instead of what was deposited on the canvas (Lanchester, 1938: 225). Only *The Nightwatch* is properly displayed, which was too well known to ignore and too pivotal to the fortunes of the painter not to show the new type of painting that the bourgeoisie rejected at the time. One camera position that Korda did use frequently for the first time in *Rembrandt* was the close-up. A whole range of characters from burghers to paupers, including the cavaliers of the watch, are held in close-up as a substitute for showing Rembrandt's painted portraits. Such faces are assumed to inspire Rembrandt (Kulik, 1975: 158). Again this slows the pace of the film.

In the end the film stands or falls on Charles Laughton's performance of the central role. His acting style and physical build were very idiosyncratic and in reviews he was either revered or damned. There was no half-way house. His Rembrandt was praised on its release by Lejeune as "probably the finest acting performance ever recorded on celluloid" (cited in Callow, 1987: 109), while the *News Chronicle*, in regard to the 1949 revival of the film, as "Simply a study of Laughton, shaggy, shambling, roguish, rolling of eye and, as far as I'm concerned, intolerable" (BFI Library Press Cuttings Collection).

In its favour, the first serious sound artist bio-pic provides a lavish attempt to reconstruct the milieu of seventeenth-century Amsterdam as depicted in the Dutch art of the time. Obviously the lack of colour limits this primarily to the mastery of chiaroscuro applied to interior sets furnished with genuine articles from the period. There is also a career defining naturalistic performance by Charles Laughton as Rembrandt. Simply being the first serious artist biopic makes the film interesting, but its financial failure and limited appeal restricted its influence, except as a warning to investors to tread carefully, and the production of more commercial artist bio-pics were held back. The major studios could learn from *Rembrandt's* mistakes. It was not a precedent as it did not set the framework for future artist bio-pics. This was to lie more in retreating to the conventional arc of the

typical Hollywood bio-pic, so a more rounded approach to the individual life-story was provided with more emphasis on positive events, rather than concentrating on downbeat experiences and attempting to represent the inner turmoils of the artist.

2.2. Artist bio-pics in Germany and Italy during the Second World War.

During World War Two the bio-pic was an integral part of strategy on the home propaganda front in the state controlled fascist movie industries. Following the outbreak of war, the cinema became the most significant form of entertainment. The importance of using this medium to get the right message across to the populace was a key part of the fascist propaganda machine. In Germany there was a cluster of film biographies of famous men in the early 1940s, often referred to as the "Genius" films. The film biographies of scientists, politicians, inventors, explorers, medical workers, as well as people from the arts, increased as war dominated daily lives.²⁴ They provided an alternative to the "Home front " films depicting the daily grind and social fragmentation of wartime life, while on another level they also suggested a sense of community as the past lives on. These were also characters with which the audience was "at home" in the sense of being familiar with them through mention in schools, the theatre, monuments, and museums so they were already part of a popular memory (Schulte-Sasse, 1996: 148).²⁵

Obviously the great men chosen for depiction had to be suitable for treatment as positive examples for promoting national socialist policies. Two major characteristics, somewhat contradictory, had to be present to gain approval. The subject needed to be both a rebel and a leader of men. The Nazi myths suggesting the Party's revolutionary origins encouraged the depiction of innovative and revolutionary acts that could be

²⁴ The films are listed in Appendix F.

²⁵ Fritz Hippler, the Reich film script advisor, stated that "The one essential requirement for a historical film is that it should have authenticity on a grand scale. The only possible subjects for a successful historical film are personalities and events from the past which people of today know about or can identify with, be interested in or find relevant. To put it in the broadest terms, this is as it were proof of the meaning of life...the timeless authenticity of particular historical events, situations and personalities" (cited in Petley, 1979: 138).

commandeered for the cause in the form of patriotic feelings and nationalist ideas.²⁶ The stubbornness of an *Andreas Schlüter* (1942) was redeemed by his call for a national architecture that was in turn to underpin the contribution of Albert Speer in the present. Likewise, Landy (1986: 176) believes that Italian historical films “Through the recuperation of history ... attempt to create a sense of the naturalness, appropriateness, and inevitability of fascism”. They too subscribed to the cult of the Leader.²⁷ While the image of neither The Führer or Il Duce remained stable over the whole war period (Rentschler, 1996: 183), the secret of successfully and flatteringly rewriting the past was in reconciling the two basic dynamics of revolution and leadership which gives the films both a tension and a greater persuasiveness. While the heroes may be hard to like as individuals, being frequently difficult, self indulgent and self-destructive, they are redeemed by their anti-authoritarianism. This is condoned because it is always directed against illegitimate power and the incompetent (Rentschler.1996:182). It was Leiser (1975: 106) who made the direct connection that honouring the great men on film was a positive projection of their virtues onto ‘The Leader’, reinforcing his promotion to the public, as with Hitler, as a great general, perhaps a supreme politician or a painter or architect of genius.

Hake (2002: 70) has pointed out that in Germany the film directors with the most public political commitment to National Socialism were those also most closely identified with biographical and historical films. The prime example is Hans Steinhoff who came to prominence in 1933 with *Hitlerjunge Quex* (Hitler Youth Quicksilver) which told the fictionalised account of Herbert Norkus, a Hitler Youth member killed in a Communist quarter of Berlin in 1932 whilst distributing Nazi leaflets.²⁸ Steinhoff went onto direct the

26 As Hitler himself expressed in *Mein Kampf*, “if, by the instrument of governmental power, a nationality is led towards its destruction, then rebellion is not only the right of every member of such a people – it is his duty” (cited in Petley, 1998:144).

27 Jean A. Gili, says that they were “Against particularism, provincialism, dialects, [for] fascism wanted a people originated from the same land, the same history, who speak the same language, under the proud eyes of a single father, the ultimate incarnation of all tutelary fathers in Italian history, of all national heroes” (cited in Landy, 1986: 176).

28 For the Berlin premiere of *Hitlerjunge Quex* the entrance to the Ufa palast am Zoo was lined by thousands of Hitler Youth in uniform. Inside were most of the Party leaders and the film was preceded by a performance of a Bruckner symphony followed by a speech by von Schirach (Hull, 1969: 34).

lavish anti-British biopic *Ohm Krüger* (1941).²⁹ In this context it seems strange for Steinhoff to choose to make *Rembrandt* next, with a script hardly full of propaganda points

Rembrandt was unusual in being the sole wartime biopic based on the life of a non-German genius (Cadars, 1976: 364). Not only was Rembrandt considered fit to be appropriated for Nazi purposes in that his life showed a stubbornness and radicalism relevant to National Socialism, but it also showed publicly that a suitable Dutchman could be admitted to the Aryan fold and have status even within an occupied country. The process had begun as early as 1890 with the publication of Julius Langbehn's *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (Rembrandt as Educator), reprinted seventy times by 1939. Langbehn declared that "Germans want to be free to do things their way and nobody does this more than Rembrandt, and in that sense he should be considered the most Germanic of all Germanic artists" (cited in Moser, 2008: 8). It was hoped that just as the Dutch language was closely related to German so the encouragement of Dutch nationalism could be incorporated into a broader pan-Germanism.³⁰ An Aryan Rembrandt was to supplant the exiled House of Orange. There was to be a cult of Rembrandt, promoted by a national holiday on Rembrandt's birthday (replacing that on the Queen's birthday), together with a new opera, elaborate ceremonies over his tomb, as well as the Steinhoff film. In fact, Moser (2008: 8) considers such actions had the opposite of the intended effect, causing great resentment. He quotes one contemporary film critic as stating that "The Rembrandt presented by the Terra film company is not our Rembrandt. It is a caricature, worse: a monstrosity".

29 The film attempted to lessen some of the shame generated by the failure of the Luftwaffe to win the Battle of Britain. This film was declared both *Reichswichtig* (Important for the Reich) one month before release and was given a new grand designation of *Film der Nation* (Film of the Nation) on opening, with Goebbels having personally approved a budget of 55 million Reichmarks at a time when film costs were officially being cut (Tegel, 2007: 176). Goebbels said on March 16, 1941, just before the film's premiere, that it was "The supreme achievement of the entire war. This is a film to go crazy about", and at a private showing in his home on April 2nd he declared it "An anti-England film beyond one's wildest dreams" (Ott, 1986: 181).

30 Similar efforts in assimilation took place with other language groups close to German. For example, Rubens was promoted in Flanders alongside Viking kitsch in Denmark and Norway (Moser, 2008: 8).

Despite Steinhoff's close connections to the Nazi leadership and his full endorsement of their policies, *Rembrandt* is generally considered to include little overt political content, with only one scene that can be construed as anti-Semitic.³¹ This scene lasts only one minute and has usually been missed. It is only recently that Tegel (2007: 205) has brought it to notice. Rembrandt is in great debt and his dead wife's cousin, who holds many of Rembrandt's IOUs, negotiates with three Jews. Tegel points out that:

"Their large black hats and coats, pointed beards, speech, gestures and acting style make their identity unmistakable, and the sequence is filmed in dark shadow...which reminds audiences of the behaviour of speculators during the Weimar hyperinflation ...This is no ordinary business deal but one which is underhand, duplicitous and conspiratorial. Sharp practice was synonymous with Jews. The Jewish characters border on caricature, in stark contrast to Rembrandt's 'Aryan' broker".³²

On a technical level Steinhoff's *Rembrandt* is graded as more impressive than the 1936 Korda biopic. Indeed Petley (1979: 18-22) rates it as the most striking German film of the war period. This is partly owing to the performance of Ewald Balser as Rembrandt, who is much more subtle than Charles Laughton, especially in the final scenes of his old age. However, in line with the Korda version, the final years have a moving and elegiac quality, which is quite different to the bombast and rhetoric of the other 'genius' films. The sets by Walter Röhmer are not over-elaborate, but with the beautiful chiaroscuro effects of the black and white cinematography, they are atmospheric. The overall effect is that the quality of the visuals, particularly in the last part of the film with camera work by Richard Angst a regular collaborator with Steinhoff, is of a standard to equal the best of German silent cinema.

31 It was considered so free of propaganda content that it qualified as the only German wartime film to be readily available to American film societies, via 16mm prints, after the War (Hull, 1961: 17). Between 1933-1942 some 500 German films were shown in American theatres, about half of the total German production. These 500 represent nearly half of all foreign language films shown in the United States (Waldman, 2008: 1,3).

32 Recent art-historical findings have re-examined the traditional close links between Rembrandt and the Jews of Amsterdam. Steven Nadler suggests Rembrandt moved to St. Antoniesbreestraat in 1639 because it was the new artistic quarter, and the street was only renamed Jodenenbreestraat, and became the main thoroughfare of the Jewish Quarter, at a later date. Also *The 'Jewish' Rembrandt* exhibition in 2007 at the Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam, claims that of the original 37 Jewish portraits attributed to Rembrandt only one, a small oil sketch of Ephraïm Bueno, a prominent Sephardic doctor, can conclusively be proven to be of a Jew, earlier classifiers being too eager to assume the mere presence of a beard or odd costume implied Jewishness (Moser, 2008: 2-3).

The other German artist bio-pic from the war years was *Andreas Schlüter* (also 1942) directed by Herbert Maisch. Like Steinhoff he had also previously directed bio-pics, in particular *Friedrich Schiller* (1940) and was committed to the Nazi cause.³³ *Andreas Schlüter* also typifies the traits of the national socialist hero. This architect and sculptor is an *Übermensch* (superman), the 'Prussian Michelangelo'. He is rebellious, radical, idealistic and stubborn. His efforts to lay down a grand plan for developing Berlin point to the deficiencies of the historical petty kingdoms and the need for a modern united German nation free of decadent foreign influences and royal whims. Petty intrigues and jealousies need to be overcome in order to look forward to the modern work of Speer, Breker and Troost. Many of Schlüter's speeches echo the sentiments of Hitler's rally speeches, equating architecture as ideology made visible, and immortal, as when he announces that "Life is short, but art is eternal" (quoted in Petley, 1998: 143-144). The film dwells on the importance of the family, with Schlüter's squeaky clean Aryan household and the marriage of his daughter to the master's apprentice, who looks as if he has come straight from a Hitler Youth rally. The film was popular on release, coming seventh in a government survey of youth groups viewing preferences (Hoffman, 1996: 109).³⁴

In Italy the fascist government did not exercise as strict control over the film industry as in Germany or Russia. While there were a few blatantly propagandist films such as *Lo squadrone bianco* (The White Squadron, 1936) or *Abuna Messias* (Cardinal Messias, 1939), generally, directors who were not fully supportive of the regime could still make films that were politically neutral or had only small elements within them that fitted in with the government's agenda, as long as the films "depicted Italian life in a positive light" (Celli, 2007: 28).

33 In a magazine article of 1944 he praised the historical bio-pic because "where could Germans better find and recognise themselves than in the mirror of their great heroes? In the midst of the nation's battle for its existence, what could move people more strongly than the heroes' battle to create this nation as a cultural and spiritual entity? Even in its contemporary political structure the German film fulfils its role as a 'moral institution'" (cited in Rentschler, 1996: 177).

34 Maisch's *Friedrich Schiller* came higher at number four. The most popular were the accounts of the founding of the German state, with *Bismarck* (1940) at number two and *Der grosse König* (The Great King, 1942) at number one.

When moving to Italian artist bio-pic productions we are in the awkward position of viewing copies not being available.³⁵ There is also barely a mention in print either of *Caravaggio* (Goffredo Alessandrini, 1941), for which only the trailer seems to have survived. For *Un'avventura di Salvator Rosa* (An Adventure of Salvator Rosa) (Alessandro Blasetti, 1939), we are reliant on Landy (1986: 212-218 and 1998: 137-141) who has seen a complete print and provides a full synopsis and comments. It can, however, be safely stated that the Italian bio-pics owe more to the example of Hollywood adventure films and historical romances than their German counterpart. Their primary purpose is entertainment with any political message very much a secondary consideration. Blasetti was the only significant Italian director who continued to attract the interest of critics after World War Two (Bondanella 2002: 14-16). He specialised in historical adventures and melodramas of which the best known is *1860* (1934). These were patriotic rather than Fascist films, always concentrating on moments of history that illustrated Italy's greatness.³⁶ However, it is not surprising that the most favoured period for Italian biopics was the Renaissance when Italy had an intellectual, artistic, cultural and political hegemony.

Landy (1986: 213, 217) has shown how Blasetti's patriotic attitude had changed by the 1940s with his enthusiasm for fascism in decline as Italy's political and economic condition deteriorated and his films focus more on the arbitrary and cruel abuses of authority. His costume tetralogy represents a transition between his fascist films and his work after 1942 (Liehm, 1984: 23).³⁷ Even the light adventure film had some veiled allegories for the present. In *Salvator Rosa* Blasetti was able to conceal within the spectacle some subtle critique of the status quo. The hero-painter leads a double life in order to protect the peasants from exploitation. As Wood (2005: 69) points out "Rosa

35 Ricci (2008: 26) estimates that of 700 films made in Italy between 1929-1943 only half had survived and even two thirds of these were only as negatives or internegatives without archival care.

36 *Vecchia guardia* (The Old Guard, 1935) was Blasetti's one overtly Fascist feature. It was set in 1922 and showed bands of Fascist 'squadristi' fighting left-wing opponents in the streets. Using a documentary style it was a herald of Italian neo-realism (Bondanella, 2002: 14). It treats Mussolini's supporters in a heroic light, very similar to Steinhoff's treatment of the Hitler Youth in *Hitlerjunge Quex*.

37 The tetralogy comprised *Ettore Fieramosca* (1938), *Un'avventura di Salvator Rosa* (1941), *La cena delle beffe* (The Jester's Banquet, 1940) and *La corona di ferro* (The Iron Crown, 1941).

aims to enable the peasants to control the water on their land, his modernising agenda rhyming with Mussolini's contemporaneous draining of the Pontine marshes". Any criticism is tempered by another message, that Rosa, like Mussolini, is a strong and virile leader able to impose order and progress on this land, acting as a benevolent despot.

Like many other directors, Blassetti uses *Salvator Rosa* as a projection of his own preferred image. This *sprezzatura* (universal man) who was actor, painter, musician, poet, satirist and soldier echoes Blassetti's feel for the epic, the pastoral, the romantic, the heroic, and the pictorial captured in a tale of ending corruption in the countryside. Rosa becomes a director-surrogate as the painter, who is also man of action, calls attention to the director who attempts to publicise and ameliorate injustice. As many directors did in occupied France, so Blassetti in Italy "side stepped the present and fled towards the past" (Leprohon, 1972: 69) where he could continue showing his skills in a formal and polished manner. This sense of style permeates *Salvator Rosa* via the use of Rosa's paintings. His villa is covered in them. The whole surrounding landscape reflects the look of his paintings which emphasises the artificial nature of the whole fable.

World War Two saw the appropriation of the bio-pic for propaganda purposes in Germany and Italy. In both countries a high standard of *mise-en-scène* was maintained, which, for the artist bio-pics was accompanied by very creative cinematography, permitting the exploitation of black and white film stock to reproduce the chiaroscuro effects of seventeenth century painting. The next phase of development was to see Hollywood turn its attention to the artist bio-pic as a genre together with the advent of colour film.

2.3. The colour of canvas: Hollywood discovers the artist bio-pic.

With the production of bio-pics remaining a staple of the Hollywood studios it was inevitable that artists would eventually be included in the pantheon of professions regarded as ripe for treatment. What is surprising is that so many renowned auteur directors were attracted to the genre, largely though their personal interest in collecting art and/or in themselves being amateur artists or having attended art school. The greater

use of colour film, particularly after the breaking of Technicolor's monopoly in the United States, also provided many of these directors with a challenge to use colour in more experimental ways, particularly in conveying mood and emotion. Another technical development, in the introduction of CinemaScope and other larger screen formats, also provided the opportunity to exhibit art on the screen in new ways, providing an audience with a different theatrical experience to projection in the standard Academy screen ratio. Together with some moves towards a more elliptical style of narrative, it will be argued that the 1950s can be seen as a period of creativity in artist biopics even within the studio system, which was to come to an end with the box-office failure of the blockbuster investment in *The Agony and the Ecstasy*.

The ground rules for these developments can actually be seen to be laid down in the 1940s. *The Moon and Sixpence* (Lewin, 1942) may be a minor film by a lesser director but it does deserve close analysis as it contains several precedents which are carried to fruition in the next generation of films.³⁸ This *roman-à-clef*, based on the life of Gauguin and adapted from the novel by W. Somerset Maugham published in 1919, has an innovatory use of both narrative and colour, used to convey the inner struggle of the

38 Lewin had been able to buy the screen rights to *The Moon and Sixpence* from MGM for only \$25,000 because the studio had been unable to develop a treatment that coped with the book's narrative being in the first person and non-chronological. Lewin overcame the problem by using a voice-over technique he copied from Sacha Guitry's *The Story of a Cheat* (1936). In fact he claimed to have introduced the voice-over narrative technique to Hollywood (Felleman 1997: 11). However, Kozloff (1988: 32-33) has shown how its use had begun in 1939 and grown more common since, though certainly Lewin's film of 1942 was more structurally dependent on it than any previous Hollywood film. The voice-over was not used before 1939 because it was considered by the studios to be too artificial. They were frightened of anything too anti-natural because they wanted to convert the public to, and exploit the synchronicity of, the new sound film, so the cinema was regarded as on a par with the theatre. Lewin recalls the narrator whenever an explanation is required to make it clear to the audience what is going on. The innovatory nature of the way this is accomplished is shown in the very first scene. The script describes the scene as: "This introductory episode is played between the rich and famous popular novelist, Geoffrey Wolfe and his valet [Maitland whose]...activity primarily consists of picking things up – a movement which punctuates the monologue of the novelist. At no time do Geoffrey and his valet betray, by the slightest sign, that either is aware of the other's presence. Geoffrey's remarks are not addressed to Maitland and they are ignored by him. The monologue is a comment meant for the audience and Geoffrey and Maitland never once look at each other" (cited in Felleman, 1997: 29). In the film this comes across as more radical stylistically than on the printed page, for not only is the narrator directly addressing the camera / the audience rather than someone or something in the film, it is done from unusual vantage points. These include Geoffrey looking in a mirror while shaving and gazing out from his bathtub. Such manipulation aids the replication of the equivocal nature of the original Maugham novel. The mood varies between comedy and drama even while a serious and disturbing narrative is being told, so the film adopts an ironic, supercilious and distant tone, remaining firmly non-judgmental.

artistic genius.³⁹ Lewin was widely regarded as “One of Hollywood’s few residential intellectuals”, having a Ph.D. in English literature from Columbia University (Felleman, 1997: 11).⁴⁰ Lewin’s experimentation was based on two assumptions. Firstly that he could make a ‘film of ideas’ comparable to the recognised form of a ‘novel of ideas’ and secondly that there needed to be a restoration of the balance between sound and image in the cinema. The coming of sound had diminished the visual power of the medium and there should be a return to his preferred aesthetics of the silent cinema. Choosing an artist as subject for his first film obviously gave him an immediate chance to expand on his preferences.

Lewin’s most prominent visual effect was the decision to differentiate between the London and Paris scenes, where black-and-white film stock is used, from the second part of the film set in Tahiti, where a sepia tint is superimposed. The sepia tone is that of old photographs, which is warm and rich evoking the heat of the island and suggesting a ‘paradise’ seen through rose-coloured spectacles. Such colouring is also ‘nostalgic’, evoking a longing for an ideal that may in fact never have been, but was inherent in Charles Strickland’s, the artist, outlook even while he was learning to paint in Paris.⁴¹ The use of the tint also heralds Strickland’s redemption once in a south sea idyll. His horrific self-centredness, misogyny and cruelty when he relentlessly pursues his goal of learning to paint in London and Paris is in keeping with the crisp black-and-white photography and unusual camera angles used. The regaining of his humanity in finding love, in addition to his final release in his painting, feels inevitable in the warm sepia colour of the island

39 The origins of the book’s title are unclear. Within online resources the favoured explanation is that the phrase was used by a reviewer of Maugham’s *Of Human Bondage* in either *The Times* or *The Times Literary Supplement* when describing the leading character, Peter Carey, as “Like so many young men, he was so busy yearning for the moon, that he never saw the sixpence at his feet” Maugham liked the analogy so much that he used it (for example see <http://Anecdote.Com/index.php?aid=13702> Accessed 05/03/2010).

40 John Russell Taylor (1983: 236) emphasises Lewin’s deliberate eccentricity, noting that “Lewin was always very consciously and obviously an odd-man-out in Hollywood: it was in a sense his gimmick. With his Savile Row suits, his collection of Pre-Columbian artefacts (years before they were fashionable), his disdain (real or apparent) for commerce, his obsession with surrealism and his host of European friends, he was absolutely what then passed in Hollywood – and probably still would- for an intellectual”. This was Albert Lewin’s first film as director after a very successful career at first in the Goldwyn and then the Mayer studios in the story departments and as production supervisor, ending up as a confidant of Irving Thalberg.

41 A Tahitian statuette is prominently displayed in several Paris scenes and his preference for a warm island far away mentioned several times in the dialogue This statuette was an exact copy of one featured in Gauguin’s work, and was modelled by Icelandic sculptress Nina Saemundsson (Felleman, 1997: 32).

scenes. The approach has its origins in Lewin's preference for the visual techniques of silent cinema, where the tinting of the film print provides an immediate, though somewhat simplistic, replication of the dominant emotion in play on the screen through choice of colour.

Lewin had wanted to use a reproduction of Gauguin's *Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?* (1897) as the work of art to be destroyed at the climax of the film, but, as will occur with several other films, the family, in the form of Gauguin's eldest son, objected to any of the artist's work being used (Felleman, 1997: 34). Lewin got round this in two ways. Firstly, he used living tableaux to simulate Gauguin's images. For example, the grieving native wife, Ata, lying face down in a dark hut suggests *Manao tupapau* (The Spirit of the Dead Keep Watch 1892) or *Nevermore* (1897), while the pose of a Tahitian man exactly reproduces *Man with an axe* (1891). Secondly, he decided to use a contemporary artist of Russian origin, Dolya Goutman, used to working in the film studios, to provide the 'masterpieces' to be shown at the end of the film. Again a solution we shall see in several later films.⁴² For *The Moon and Sixpence*, the paintings for the climactic scenes were filmed in 16mm Kodachrome. Lewin related how, "The original Kodachrome was very beautiful, but of course, we couldn't make prints from it" (quoted in Felleman, 1997: 36).⁴³ While the poor quality print detracts from the intended effect, the mixed aesthetics of superimposing exotic detail over a Renaissance composition was certainly bold and was worthy of the complex origins invoked in Gauguin's original Tahitian work.

The innovations within *Moulin Rouge* revolved around the use of colour as a means of replicating the work of a great artist, though the film's origins, like *The Moon*

42 There was only one week available to complete these paintings so Lewin suggested they be based on the Renaissance masterpieces, Botticelli's *Primavera* (Spring, c1482) and Bernadino Luini's *The Bath of the Nymphs* (1520-23), by simply changing the female figures to Tahitian girls and cypress trees to palm trees. While Lewin, in an interview in 1966, believed no-one had noticed this crib, Philip Hartung in reviewing the film did think the paintings were "its greatest flaw...showing us some third-rate artist in Technicolor near the film's end and telling us that this is the work of a great artist" (cited in Felleman, 1997: 35). In fact, it was not Technicolor in use, as the company refused to provide a colour insert within a black-and-white feature. We shall find similar obstruction involved in the making of *Moulin Rouge* (1952).

43 "The problem was to transfer to a negative from which prints could be made and we had to do it a two-color, rather than in a three-color process, and the loss of quality was enormous" (quoted in Felleman, 1997: 36).

and Sixpence, were literary, in the bestselling novel of 1950 by Pierre La Mure, loosely based on the life of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. While Huston at first considered the original source novel too sentimental and romanticised, he came round to the idea of filming it after envisaging an ending where the ghosts of the leading characters from the famous Parisian music hall dance past Toulouse-Lautrec on his death bed. It became a personal project with Huston producing, scriptwriting and directing. Here, directing *Moulin Rouge*, he could translate his interest in painting directly to film for the first time.⁴⁴ The rights to the book turned out to be held by José Ferrer, the very actor Huston wanted to play Toulouse-Lautrec (Dunant, 1990: 44). Huston was steeped in art and saw the production as an opportunity to make a film as if it was being photographed by Toulouse-Lautrec. He was interested in the visual surface rather than in the life of the artist. He wanted "to evoke the painter's vision using the camera itself" (Hammen, 1985: 69). This made the inaccuracies and self-censorship in La Mure's sanitised pseudo-biographical novel unimportant to him. Huston wanted to replicate the feel and emotion of Lautrec's work and any narrative was only a peg to hang this on. The La Mure version of Lautrec's life had the great advantage of already being proved acceptable to the moral guardians of the day.

Another factor pulling Huston towards directing *Moulin Rouge* was his affinity with the artist depicted. As with so many artist bio-pics the artist is often more of an alter-ego of the film's director than a representation of the historical figure allegedly at the centre of the film. As Dunant (1990: 44), has observed,

44 In fact, *Moulin Rouge* is the only Huston film in which the central figure is an artist. Huston was an avid art collector and owned two works by Toulouse-Lautrec, and adored the Impressionists (McCarty, 1987: 95). While writing the script of *Moulin Rouge* Huston visited Deauville and bought a Monet *Waterlilies* for \$10,000, which he had won at the Casino (Gobel, 1990: 386 and Huston, 2013: 53-54). He had enrolled at art school in Los Angeles when only seventeen, which was followed by a period studying painting in London and Paris. There is some dispute over the exact nature of Huston's stay in Paris. The earliest biographies indicate a long stay of perhaps eighteen months, seemingly based on a statement by his first biographer William F. Nolan. Subsequently Huston himself only mentioned a visit of a few days and omitted any mention of such an incident in his autobiography (Hammen, 1985: ix-x). Seeing reproductions of paintings by Duchamp, Picasso and Matisse reproduced in a newspaper, Huston (1980: 21) said "I caught fire". He was taught in Los Angeles by Stanton MacDonald-Wright, an abstract painter and founder of Synchronism (Walker, 1993: 29).

“the fictional Lautrec (as indeed, the real man) was the portrait of a typical Huston hero: a troubled dreamer, an emotional cripple, a misfit by nature of his deformity, his birthright and the circumstances of his career. A man who defeats himself in his personal life, but professionally refuses to accept or even acknowledge defeat”.

Huston claimed that “I would never have made *Moulin Rouge* in black-and-white” (cited in Kaminsky, 1978: 140).⁴⁵ He wanted to reproduce the exact palette that Lautrec had used, “To use colour photography the way Lautrec used colour in his paintings” (Huston, n.d., 3). To this end he employed cameramen who were willing to join in an experiment in film colour design. Technicolor, the dominant market purveyor of 35mm colour film, sold its product on the promise of providing very bright sharp glossy colour images, as Huston put it, “Like a beer add, where you can see every bubble in the foam” (cited in Kaminsky, 1978: 94). In *Moulin Rouge* Huston wanted hazy, flat monochromatic colours which flew directly against the ethos and practice experience of Technicolor, which Oswald Morris, the film’s cinematographer, saw as a company who promoted “harsh and garish... Strong, hard, powerful colours” (Grobel, 1990: 389). Huston also employed Eliot Elisofon, still-photographer from *Life* magazine who specialised in colour pictures, as colour consultant to work with Morris to find the solutions to achieving the exact colour balance he required. Huston’s instructions to Morris were that, “I want it to look as though Toulouse-Lautrec had directed it” (cited in Grobel, 1990: 388).⁴⁶ Morris admitted that “*Moulin Rouge* broke every rule in the book”, that “we were just doing everything to destroy what lens manufacturers, laboratories, and film stock manufacturers were trying to achieve”. Romulus was taking a real risk because “Half the time we didn’t know where we were going but that was the gamble and we had a gambling director” (quoted in Eyles, 1971: 30-31). The sets were filled with smoke and the solids back-lit with very strong light-scattering coloured filters to make the actors stand out from the background, as in Lautrec’s work. The filters had previously only ever been

45 Huston was not against black-and-white in principle, being quite willing to use it again in two future films, *Freud* (1962) and *The Misfits* (1961), where he felt colour would have been a distraction (Kaminsky, 1978: 140).

46 When Technicolor saw the first rushes they publicly disowned the film. They pleaded with Huston not to ruin the name of the company, and its owner, Dr. Herbert T. Kalman, even sent his wife over to France to verify what the test shots looked like (Grobel, 1990: 384, 391). However, the production company, Romulus, was willing to back Huston and the idea of continued experimentation (Huston, 1980: 211).

used for exterior scenes (Huston, n.d.: 5). In addition, each of the main characters was assigned an appropriate colour shade from the shadow and filler lights. Toulouse-Lautrec was blue-green, the prostitute Marie was purple-violet and the sympathetic model Myriamme was pink. Much of the film has a dark background, from which characters emerge, often brightly costumed. There are only two bright scenes in the whole production.⁴⁷

While all the technical wizardry worked and won contemporary high praise, the quality of subsequent distribution prints has not been of the same standard and the full beauty and care undertaken in the colour process has largely been lost. Only traces remain of all the film's glorious colour (Brill, 1997: 10).⁴⁸ Due to this, the film's contribution to the development of colour cinematography has been undervalued. It showed that colour did not have to be 'natural', or, as the Technicolor studios would put it, more 'lifelike' than black-and-white. *Moulin Rouge* proved that the creative cinematographer could take what he wanted from reality, that the use of colour was as subjective as in painting.⁴⁹ Huston (1980: 211) summed up his film's achievement as "It was the first picture that succeeded in dominating the colour instead of being dominated by it".

Huston accepted the screenplay, which closely followed the novel, as the best compromise he would be allowed to film in the moral climate of the time. Some incidents were built-up to be more dramatic, such as Henri's fall, which caused his legs to stop growing, being transferred from a mere fall off a kitchen stool to a dramatic tumble down the full length of a grand staircase. His multiple relationships with women are pared down to just the archetypical prostitute, Marie, contrasted to the sweet natured and achingly

47 One where Henri is a boy before his accident and the other as an adult when he stops contemplating suicide and turns off the gas jets, as he is more attracted to finishing his poster of Jane Avril as the bright light of dawn pours across the screen.

48 The loss of colour quality was to prove even greater for the special colour processes used in Huston's *Moby Dick* (1956) and *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1967). Even by 1965, when interviewed by Robert F. Hawkins for the *New York Times*, Huston was aware for *Moulin Rouge* that "Everyone raved about that one at the time. Now no one asks me about it any more" (cited in Kaminsky, 1978: 96).

49 Elisofon said that in justifying his search for a tonal range that corresponded to oil paint, "Since movies are a form of fiction how much better to make the colour fictional too! I never believed that colour in pictures ought to be a facsimile of the real thing...I hold that filters are to a photographer what glazes are to a painter" (cited in Hammen, 1985: 70).

honest Myriamme.⁵⁰ His stay in an asylum and his mental problems are ignored, while his long periods spent in brothels, to avoid censorship, are cleverly relayed by a montage of Lautrec's paintings of the subject without any commentary.⁵¹

As well as attempting an exact reproduction of nineteenth century Paris in the locations, sets and colours, Huston suggests the speed and fluidity of Lautrec's artistic creation and inspiration on several occasions by filming over the artist's shoulder, so the audience sees Lautrec's hand actually sketching. This was the hand of Marcel Vèrtes, the film's costume designer, who had actually made a living by making forgeries of Lautrec's work in the 1920s. The sketching was shown in real time as Vèrtes could work so quickly (Huston, 1980: 211).

Carl Dreyer (1970: 197), the Danish filmmaker, wrote in 1955 that *Moulin Rouge* was one of only four or five colour films made that gave him any aesthetic pleasure. However, his appreciation is restricted to the opening twenty minutes providing a panorama of life within the dance hall, where the work of Toulouse-Lautrec is most directly brought to life. Outside this building, in the imagined world of Lautrec's private life, Dreyer considers Huston's inspiration deserts him. The dynamic action and superb colour palette make the film's opening so memorable. Its spectacle climaxes with the Can-Can, where immediacy is conveyed by Huston being the first director to use a hand-held camera for a sequence in a feature film (Pratley, 1977: 96). The sequence's emotional climax, however, comes at its end, when Lautrec shifts from his ringside table seat to leave the now deserted building, and it is only then that the audience is made

50 Prostitution and brothels could not be mentioned explicitly under the Production Code. The screenplay refers to a "street girl", "a witch of the streets" and "a vixen of the streets" when describing the character Marie Charlet (Hammen, 1985: 69).

51 Huston was ready to admit that "If I were to do that picture again it would be entirely different", but, "At the time censorship wouldn't have permitted the telling of the real story" (cited in Grobel, 1990: 396). The star of the film, José Ferrer, defended Huston against criticism that the film was not explicit enough, saying, "I've always felt suggestion is every bit as good as statement and that picture makes explicit what was going on. It didn't avoid or sidestep anything. John took a book about a man who fell in love with a woman who said, 'Get away, you're ugly and weird' and who then hung around with prostitutes because he could buy their love. John *did* make it explicit. It *was* a whorehouse; he *was* an alcoholic. If the ending was sentimental, John was very proud of it. I don't know what truth was avoided" (cited in Grobel, 1990: 395).

aware of his dwarfish stature, as his shoulders only reach to the height of the table. The film's use of colour was to become standard and was a basis for even further development, to be discussed next, relating to *Lust for Life*. The film was the biggest box-office success of Huston's career and encouraged producers to consider the artist biopic to be of prime potential for future investment (Grobel, 1990: 397).

This was certainly the case at MGM with *Lust for Life*.⁵² In addition, the recent success of Van Gogh exhibitions with visitors queuing round the block brought this particular subject to the studio's attention. The prices of Van Gogh work at auction were beginning to set world records and reproductions of his works to appear on popular merchandising (Housman, 1986: 221).⁵³ MGM had taken out an option on Irving Stone's novel for \$120,000 in 1934 and suddenly realised that this was to expire in January 1956, leaving only a few months to finish a movie.⁵⁴ As with *Moulin Rouge*, the enthusiasm of both director and star of the film was to play a large part in getting the project off the ground. It was to be the only time that the director, Vincente Minnelli, actually requested his studio to let him direct a particular film (Naremore, 1993: 137 and Harvey, 1989: 221).⁵⁵ The star, Kirk Douglas, had been preparing a production of Van Gogh's life and talking to Jean Negulesco to direct. Minnelli and his producer John Houseman insisted Douglas play Van Gogh owing to his striking physical resemblance as well as his first-rate performances in recent Minnelli pictures.⁵⁶

52 The discussion of *Lust for Life* in this chapter is confined to its origins, production and immediate reception. Its influence in the mythologising of Van Gogh and its own iconic status will be examined in Chapter 2.

53 Even by the mid-50s it was worthwhile for Kirk Douglas to offer to forgo a salary on *Lust for Life* in exchange for a single Van Gogh canvas, but MGM turned the offer down. Douglas said, "I can only afford to play Van Gogh. I can't afford to own him" (cited in Naremore, 1993: 152).

54 Other companies had looked at the possibilities. For example, in Italy in 1951 director Cesare Zavattini looked at possible locations, and in 1954 producer Giuseppe d'Amato was in talks with independent American producer Robert Goldstein (Pinxteren, 1993: 198). MGM itself had considered a production to star Spencer Tracey in 1946. Dalton Trumbo and Irving Stone had both attempted a script, but it was only the new scriptwriter Norman Corwin who succeeded in investing any drama into the story (Harvey, 1989: 222).

55 His background in art and design gave him an affinity with the subject of the film. His temperament, also like Van Gogh, produced a blinkered concentration on his work at the expense of all relationships. Minnelli was reflecting his own viewpoint and problems in the film.

56 Douglas was more than happy to come on board as long as his own company Bryna was involved (Douglas, 1988: 264), and as an avid art collector, began to prepare himself in the role. Both Minnelli and Douglas immersed themselves in the volumes of Vincent's letters to his brother Theo (Munn, 1985: 61).

Minnelli wanted to film using the standard Academy screen ratio because this best fitted the shape of Van Gogh's paintings. However, he was over-ruled by the MGM Chief Executive Arthur Lowe as the studio had officially embraced the use of CinemaScope, with its screen ratio of 2.35:1, as part of the battle against losing audiences to television (Minnelli, 1975: 288). *Lust for Life* therefore became the first artist biopic to be made in the new screen size and Minnelli was faced with not only learning new techniques to transmit the drama of the narrative but also to consider how to display Van Gogh's artworks within a frame that did not fit the shape of the originals. His regular producer at the time, John Houseman, had stated that, "I've seen too many pictures about artists that have been an embarrassment. I'll only work on it if we agree that the reproduction of the paintings should be brilliantly done" (Minnelli, 1975: 288). A team of still cameramen went out to museums and photographed the originals based on advice from technical consultant John Rewald from the Museum of Modern Art, New York.⁵⁷ The results showed "all the brush strokes and even those areas where he'd squeezed paint out of the tube on the canvas" (Minnelli, 1975: 288).

Many establishments would not collaborate because they were suspicious of the intentions of a Hollywood studio, especially when they knew the script was based on a popular novel. For example, the Kröller-Müller Museum at Otterloo and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam refused because not only was the film based on "a second-rate book" but also because they knew Minnelli primarily as "a director of musicals" (Pinxteren, 1993: 198). Also the opposition of the Van Gogh family to the project was well publicised. They were especially anxious for Van Gogh's medical diagnosis not to be revealed. Theo's surviving son refused to permit direct quotations from Van Gogh's letters as well as to release paintings (Harvey, 1989: 223). The letters narrated in the film were created by scriptwriter Norman Corwin, who treated them rather as a radio bulletin updating the audience on the latest developments (Harvey, 1989: 222). Minnelli claimed that many works essential to his purpose were denied to him because of these problems

⁵⁷ Long time exposed stills were converted onto eight by ten inch transparencies which were then back lit and rephotographed by movie cameras with 'inset' equipment and special lenses. Movie cameras could not be used to film originals directly because of the extreme heat generated by the illumination which would have harmed the painting.

(Parker, 1985: 60). However, as Van Gogh was so prolific there was still plenty of choice of canvases for display in the film.

The film was to take the principle of location shooting even further than *Moulin Rouge*. The use of the actual sites of Van Gogh's work was essential to Minnelli's working concept. He wanted to convey the inner torment of the man, to contrast the actual exterior worlds to the visions of it as conveyed in the finished paintings after it had been transformed by Van Gogh's inner turmoil. Filming in Europe also gave Minnelli much more freedom as by the time the American executives had seen the rushes it was too late to alter them. The production team went to considerable lengths to record the locations accurately. The first scene to be shot was in fact nearly the last in the film, the cornfield in Auvers-sur-Oise where Vincent shoots himself. Minnelli was delayed in Hollywood and the actual wheat field painted by Van Gogh was kept in peak harvesting condition for two weeks by chemical treatment before filming could take place.⁵⁸ The other major sites used were the original family home in Neunen, Dr Gachet's garden in Auvers, and the abandoned insane asylum at Saint-Remy. Even more would have been used if the European weather had been better. For example, rain prevented Vincent's courting scene with his cousin Kee being shot in Holland (Harvey, 1989: 242). Finally the decision had to be taken to film it in the studio at Culver City on return to the United States. The highly stylised depiction of the picnic scene with its studio reproduction of the flora as in a Van Gogh painting was not Minnelli's original intention. The drama was meant to be played out en plein air in a natural setting. The film's overall ambiguity in presentation of viewpoint was therefore not entirely part of the original design. Minnelli insisted on having Adrienne Fazan as editor to ensure the correct rhythm was obtained when he juxtaposed the recreated nineteenth century location scenes against the flashes of Van Gogh's own vision of what the audience had just seen (Harvey, 1989: 243). Minnelli

58 The crows required to attack Van Gogh in this sequence were very hard to find as French farmers had been deliberately killing them off. Six-hundred crows were purchased from all over France at five francs per bird. Cartloads of them began arriving on set from mid-July, ready for filming on the twentieth. A special crew of crow keepers had to be recruited. For the attack sequence in the wheatfield the birds' legs were secured with fine piano wire so they could be pulled back and forth. There was a difficulty in disposing of the birds after the shoot as they could not by law be simply released for fear of arrest or a heavy fine. They could be destroyed. The producer, John Houseman, deliberately did not try to find out what had been done to them when they just disappeared the day after filming finished (Houseman, 1986: 342-343 and Parker, 1985: 58, 60).

wanted this to be treated as a rapid shock transition without pause. This was to be a deliberate contrast to the traditional dull display of establishing shots of the artist at his easel to a fade out on the finished work. The film treats Van Gogh as a photographic realist whilst also seeing the world through his eyes at different points. "He made the outer world reflect his inner reality. We see the way he saw; we feel the way he felt" (Casper, DVD commentary).

Van Gogh's paintings are presented to the audience in a number of ways and permeate the *mise-en-scène*. They are on the walls of the rooms and scattered around the studios. There are even living tableaux reproducing the essence of the painting, as in the local peasants recruited to enact *The Potato Eaters* or the *Night Café* or *Portrait of Dr. Gachet*. There are also elaborate montages, particularly at the beginning and end of the film. At the end the despair of Vincent's death is alleviated by the joy and achievement enshrined in the gradual build up of dozens of images as the camera pans backwards to reveal more and more masterpieces.⁵⁹ To fit the CinemaScope screen the camera pans across the pictures or zooms in on significant details rather than show the whole work. The *Wheatfield with Crows* was one of the few canvases whose shape coincided with the CinemaScope ratio.

In the same way that Huston was insistent on reproducing the colour palette of Toulouse-Lautrec, so Minnelli negotiated with MGM to secure Van Gogh's. He was particularly anxious to reproduce the correct shades of sunflower yellow and cobalt blue as Minnelli saw this yellow as the key to Vincent's art, reflecting his adoration of the sun and subconsciously representing turmoil (Minnelli, 1975: 290). The battle had now moved on from being with Technicolor, as that company had lost its monopoly over colour film stock owing to anti-trust legislation. The studios had now embraced monopak film stock over the three negative Technicolor because it was both cheaper and faster to process. However, Minnelli (1975: 289) did not want to use the standard monopak in use by MGM,

⁵⁹ The works in progress were painted by Robert Andrew Parker, who often only had a short time to prepare them for the camera. Kirk Douglas wanted to be able to appear competent when shown painting. For the wheat-field scene where the camera was to show him actually marking the canvas he wanted to be able to insert his own crows onto Parker's copy, and so he engaged a French artist to show him how. He painted over 800 crows before he felt he had reached an acceptable standard (Munn, 1985: 61).

which was Eastmancolor, as its colour was too 'candy box' and much brighter than in real life. He held out to get the company to use Ansco Color, which was originally based on the German Agfacolour, but had been recently improved to give a finer grain and a higher definition.⁶⁰ The release prints remained in Eastmancolor, and like *Moulin Rouge*, the real beauty of the film was soon lost in colour deterioration, especially of the blues and greens, as the prints turned a rosy purple (Casper, 2007: 96).⁶¹

Where *Moulin Rouge* had experimented with what amounted to a colour coding of the leading characters, rather like a leitmotif in opera, Minnelli undertook a far more ambitious use of colour in *Lust for Life*. He envisaged each of the five main narrative sections of Van Gogh's life that were to be depicted in the film would have its own predominant colour tone to express the emotion of that sequence and emphasise the colour palette of the paintings of the period. A limited colour spectrum is used until the point where Van Gogh discovers the use of light and colour in his own work. Thus, for the first sequence, in the Borinage there is an emphasis on blacks and greys to reflect the dirt and poverty and misery of the mines. This turns to lush dark greens for Vincent's return to the Dutch countryside for recuperation. In The Hague his liaison with Christine is played against dark night time scenes where the use of shadows suggests Flemish genre paintings. When he reaches Paris there is a predominance of reds and blues as there is an exhibition of Impressionist painting and in bright interiors, so refreshing after the first forty minutes of the film in dark colours. In Arles the gold of the sun and the blue of the Provençal sky provides a moment of pure lyricism. On Vincent opening the shutters to his bedroom on his first morning after arrival, a tracking shot of dappled branches in blossom shifts imperceptibly into Van Gogh's own glowing blue and white landscapes,⁶² Intense

60 MGM was shown test footage shot in both processes (Harvey, 1989: 223). Then it was discovered that Ansco Color had stopped producing this particular film stock. MGM bought up the 300,000 feet of remaining stock that it could find only to discover the processing plant was also closed and a new plant had to be established. The stock did provide the quality of negative Minnelli required and the process was then named Metrocolor and became the studio standard.

61 It is uncertain how far studios were aware of the life of their film stock. Eastmancolor put a warning on all its products. Many executives did not feel the films had an afterlife anyway and in any case believed the negative was manufactured to last. It was not until about 1960 that it was accepted that the average print life was only five years and a negative ten years. The negative's life could be upgraded to twenty years if it was stored at five degrees centigrade less (Casper, 2007: 96).

62 Minnelli openly acknowledged that his inspiration for this moment came from *The Great Waltz* (1938) with its montage of flowers (Minnelli, 1975: 289).

colour hints at Van Gogh's obsessiveness and instability with the deep sapphire of the blue water in the bay of *Starry Night* or the blood red of the *Night Café* encouraged by imbibing absinthe. For the final sequence in Auvers and Paris a riot of colour is permitted to depict his pent-up emotions, ending with dark circles enclosing his sun.

As well as having innovative colour photography, *Lust for Life*, is a turning point in the development of the bio-pic as a whole, and not just the artist bio-pic. Up to this point bio-pics had tended to cover the subject's life from the cradle to the grave, in a linear approach. In this film, particularly for the audience most familiar with Hollywood productions, the partial coverage and jumps in chronology herald a freer approach to the genre. The risk in this approach was acknowledged in the marketing of the finished product. It was initially promoted as 'high art'. The New York first run was at the Plaza, a theatre associated with the presentation of foreign art house movies.⁶³ Minnelli and the other participants in the film were happy with this approach. What they had not expected was the MGM publicity machine trying to attract a lowbrow market at the same time, with a promotional poster that salaciously suggested "a maniacal artist in the act of raping a nude model", very much the 'lust' in the title (Houseman, 1986: 346). The trailer also proceeded on similar lines, with the use of such tag-lines and text as "his tumultuous career is revealed for the first time, with frankness and intimacy...With all the lust for life that drove him to the extremes of passion...A life story of passion and violence...Kirk Douglas as Van Gogh...torn between genius and desire. Anthony Quinn as Gauguin...for whom no woman was too good...or too bad".⁶⁴ Box-office receipts in the United States were only \$1.6 million, despite favourable reviews. The film fell between the two sales approaches. The ordinary public felt it was too highbrow for them and their tastes while the middlebrows were suspicious of such a Hollywood vehicle.⁶⁵ In Europe the film fared

63 The premiere was a benefit for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, while the European premiere was at the Edinburgh Festival (Harvey, 1989: 243). The most elegant New York department stores, including Henri Bendel, Best and Company and Bonwit Teller, worked with MGM to display fashions in their windows against a backdrop of Van Gogh landscapes and still lifes (Houseman, 1979: 482).

64 Kirk Douglas was so annoyed at this approach that to counteract it he began to imply in press interviews that Van Gogh might be homosexual. He was soon gagged and the popular marketing continued. (Harvey, 1989: 243 and Naremore, 1993: 147).

65 Harvey (1989:244) conveys the latter's reaction as, "The title is bad enough; add to this the prospect of Kirk Douglas gritting his gleaming choppers in CinemaScope while Miklos Rozsa whips the MGM orchestra to frenzy, and it portends a lust for showmanship far stronger than any fealty to art".

better, with takings on a par with MGM's hit adventure yarn of 1953, *Mogambo*. Houseman (1986: 346) found that "In Europe, particularly, it was a subject of general astonishment ...that Americans could produce so artistic and sensitive a picture". Those owners of original pictures used in the film were reassured that the film was not the bedside romp it was promoted as in the States.

However, this classification of the artist biopic as a frivolous excuse for a saucy yarn was not without basis. Not every title had any innovation or insight to contribute to the genre. 1959 was to see what was a more typical example released, *The Naked Maja*. Like *Lust for Life*, this was launched on a false promise of adult scenes and a European art house influence. Several projects about the life of Goya never got beyond the drawing board in the early 1950s (TCM, 2008: 1). This one did because Ava Gardner was willing to star in it as the last film to be made under her seventeen year old MGM contract. Even Norman Corwin who was ultimately brought in to try and breathe some life into a clichéd screenplay found it impossible to match the kind of work he undertook on *Lust for Life*, and there were constant rewrites daily on the set.⁶⁶ The production was beset with the kind of problems that were proving to be a standard irritant in making an artist biopic. The Duchess of Alba's relations won the backing of the Franco government in Spain to refuse filming there, and filming had to move to Italy. Also, the filming of original Goya paintings had to be done clandestinely under the guise of making a cultural documentary (Server, 2006: 353). A troubled shoot led to what was generally agreed to be a 'turkey', whose story had little in common with history, and because of what *Variety* termed "a maze of pompous dialog and muddled emotions that seldom ring true", very little in the way of entertainment (TCM, 2008:3).⁶⁷ The film's notoriety arises from a dispute between United Artists and the United States Post Office.⁶⁸ UA distributed 2,268 postcard

66 Corwin tried, too late, to have his name removed from the credits (TCM, 2008: 1).

67 Henry Koster, who had directed *The Robe*, the first film in CinemaScope, did an uninspired and static job. Anthony Franciosa and Ava Gardner had a tempestuous love/hate relationship, which unfortunately did not translate into any smouldering passion on screen. Their antics were the inspiration for the Hollywood star section of Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*. Franciosa was a method actor, completely out of key with the rest of the cast, who were all Italian except for the two leads. It was incredibly hot throughout the shoot in Rome (Server, 2006: 356, 358,362).

68 The complicated funding arrangements led to United Artists having the rights in the United States, MGM releasing it in all foreign countries except Italy, and in Italy distribution belonged to Titanus (TCM, 2008: 1).

reproductions of *The Naked Maja* painting as a promotion to editors, film and record distributors in the USA. The Post Office declared them obscene. At the same time newspapers and billboards began to refuse advertisements for the film where the same image was included in the background. This, of course, provided the film with massive free publicity and in the end the objecting parties backed down after the Justice Department ruled that “the postal cards at issue are neither obscene, lewd, lascivious nor filthy” (Time, 1959 and TCM, 2008: 1-2).

Hollywood studio investment in the artist biopic genre reached its zenith with *The Agony and the Ecstasy*. With a budget of ten million dollars and the use of four thousand extras it was one of the most expensive films of 1965 and had pretensions to high culture although it was based on the popular novel by Irving Stone.⁶⁹ It had an integral opening ten-minute introduction to the work of Michelangelo; an intermission followed by an overture; and began its release on the road show circuit with separate performances in selected cinemas and high-ticket prices. The Fox studio shot it in the Todd-AO process which was used for all their prestige large-scale productions. This used 65mm gauge for the film stock, which was transferred to 70mm for the release prints to allow the extra space for six-track sound including surround sound. Projected it gave an image three and a half times larger than standard 35mm film (Casper, 2007: 112). *The Agony and the Ecstasy* was seen as an epic and had the leading player in this type of film, Charlton Heston, as its star. He pursued the studio executives quite hard in 1963 to get them to agree to make it. He too hoped it would be a production with cultural merit and increase his own reputation being associated with it. His diary entry for 8th January 1964 notes that Carol Reed was to be the director and says “This is good, I’m sure. We have a chance for a superior film with him; he confers class on the whole project” (1980: 190). Fox wanted a European art director to match the cultural aspirations of the film (Moss, 1987: 245).

Like *Lust for Life*, the film premiered with a benefit for the Metropolitan Museum, New York. The film was badly received and had poor box-office returns.⁷⁰ It was set up

69 Published in 1961, which had sold fifty-one million copies by 1963 (Wapshott, 1990: 318).

70 For example, the *New York Herald Tribune* pronounced it “dull, dull, dull and unspectacular”, while *Life* said “phony situations, stereotyped characters, tawdry spectacles and...two hours and twenty minutes

much more as an (inaccurate) art history lesson rather than epic entertainment. It is the only artist bio-pic that begins with a ten minute introductory lecture which is in effect a separate documentary on Michelangelo's work, particularly his sculpture. When this morphs after the credits into a battle scene, the outdoor spectacle feels merely tagged on to give some action sequences. The regular outdoor excursions are not fully integrated into the main narrative as Michelangelo has no place in them and it is also not made very clear what the battles are about or their historical significance. The great problem, however, is the fact that while the novel covered his whole life from thirteen to the grave the film concentrates only on the four and a half year period that Michelangelo spent in Rome painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel at the request of Pope Julius the Second. There is simply very little narrative drive, the key element in making history enticing to the filmgoer. The sparring between Michelangelo and the Pope is set up and is then repeated several times. The initial comic effect is worn away by repetition. The Pope keeps asking Michelangelo "When will you make an end?" Michelangelo keeps repeating "When I'm finished".⁷¹ There are lots of processions in church vestments which simply decorate the screen. Hollywood tries to bring in some love interest with Contessina di Medici (Diane Cilento) nursing Michelangelo when he has a physical breakdown but the script even leaves this uncertain. It is as if the unspoken suggestion of his homosexuality is very much present, making the attempt at tender romance bloodless.

Not enough credit has been given to the film's depiction of the painting techniques of the period. Reed was insistent on great pains being taken to achieve accuracy. The Vatican did consider allowing the film crew to actually work with the original ceiling in the Chapel but this was ruled out by Reed as the condition of the paintings was too poor for reproduction directly on the large CinemaScope screen, particularly the deep cracks in the plaster. Also the colours had turned very dark in some areas compared to what Michelangelo would have seen (Wapshott, 1990: 320).⁷² An

of boredom" (cited in Moss, 1987: 246). Moss himself, while generally defending the work of Reed, finds it hard to find any redeeming features in this film, concluding that "Every ingredient in *Agony* seems on an epic scale except its level of imagination and intelligence".

71 Charlton Heston (1980: 190) recognised this danger in the script. His diary for January 14th 1964 records his fears. "We have to find a way to keep them from being simply a series of quarrels".

72 In addition the insurance cover was going to cost a fortune and there was a fear that the actors might be intimidated working in such holy surroundings (Wapshott, 1990: 320).

exact replica of the Chapel was built at the Cinecittà studios. Reed vetoed using any copies by artists. The originals were photographed and their colour chemically restored. All the panels were sealed so making it possible to cover them with plaster and then prepare them in any stage of completion a given scene required (Heston, 1980: 204-205). The processes involved in the original painting were carefully introduced, such as the puncturing of a cartoon outline held against the plaster to provide a working outline of the figures in a panel. The seventy feet scaffolding was a copy of that specially designed by Michelangelo. Heston found it very unsafe and it was given additional supports in scenes when it was not being filmed from ground level (1980:206). Only one feature was exaggerated, in that it is implied that the whole ceiling was painted by Michelangelo on his back, as this increases the inherent drama of the creation as paint could then drip back onto his face and onto the Pope and his entourage in procession beneath.⁷³ In reality the scaffolding did permit Michelangelo to stand upright, although this meant he had to constantly twist his neck to paint.

Chapter 2.4. The hard road to enlightenment: the artist biopic in the USSR and the German Democratic Republic 1966- 1971

At the same time that Hollywood was investing in a blockbuster artist biopic in *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, similar moves were afoot in the Eastern Block of Europe. In the USSR the six-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Andrei Rublev, the most famous medieval icon painter, provided an opportunity for a large-scale tribute to Russian nationalism and pride, suitable for showing as part of the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the October Revolution.⁷⁴ In East Germany DEFA was prepared to underwrite the most expensive film in its history based on the life of Goya. Neither production turned out as its backers had expected and both became entangled in what in hindsight seem inevitable

⁷³ The paint was made of chocolate pudding so Heston could swallow it when necessary (Wapshott, 1990: 323).

⁷⁴ Rublev's icons were first rehabilitated in the 1930's by Stalin as a symbol of national solidarity. For the 600th anniversary of Rublev's birth in 1960, the Russian authorities sponsored a series of events including exhibitions, catalogues, studies, culminating in the inauguration of the Andrei Rublev Museum of Old Russian Art at the former Andronikov Monastery, Moscow, where Rublev had been based for a number of years (Bird, 2004: 18). Rublev was canonised by the Russian Orthodox Church in 1988 (Efird, 2007: 87).

controversy and state censorship.⁷⁵ Perhaps because of their surrounding difficulties, for Western critics and commentators, their main thrust was taken as a portrayal of the compromised position of the artist within a socialist state. The aesthetic value of the films was secondary and the fact that they were giving an insight into the origins of artistic creation and exhibiting the work of important artists came a long way behind. So much has been written on the work of Andrei Tarkovsky in particular, with a consensus that he is one of the greatest Russian filmmakers, with *Andrei Rublev* and its uncompromising individuality setting the style for his later works (Bird, 2004: 8). Konrad Wolf, who directed *Goya – oder Der arge Weg der Erkenntnis* (1971), has similarly been revered as the most important director in the history of the DEFA (Deutsche Film – Aktiengesellschaft) studios. The two themes that have been selected for analysis here are how the two films reflect the problems of the society within which they were produced and also their role in developing new approaches to style within the artist biopic. The widely different approaches taken in each case are shown even on the surface in an immediate contrast between the black and white cinematography and paucity of factual information about the artist subject in *Andrei Rublev* compared to the lavish colour production values and cluttered narrative exposition in *Goya*. It must be remembered that although *Andrei Rublev* was made in 1966 it only gained a release in Russia in 1971, at the same time that *Goya* was distributed, and *Rublev*'s international release was delayed until 1973. To the cinema-going public the two films therefore seemed to be released simultaneously, both covering similar themes but in an entirely different manner.

Following the worldwide success of his first film *Ivan's Childhood* (*Ivanovo detstvo*, 1962), Tarkovsky was able to impose his own choice of story for his second film, *Andrei Rublev*.⁷⁶ Tarkovsky said, "I wanted to use the example of Rublev to explore the question of the psychology of artistic creativity, and analyse the mentality and civic awareness of

⁷⁵ For example, Beumers " (2009: 145) has commented that "The cases of *Andrei Rublev* (1966) and *Asya's Happiness* (*Asino schaste'e*) (Konchalovsky, 1965/66) show the impossibility for artists of developing their cinematic language without interference from the authorities. Youngblood (1996: 139) believes "The political ramifications of *Andrei Rublev* in the context of the Soviet Union in the Brezhnev era are obvious to those who understand these issues, so obvious that Tarkovsky could not possibly have believed he could make this film unimpeded by censorship".

⁷⁶ The screenplay was published in the journal *Iskusstvo Kino*, Nos. 4 and 5 (Zorkaya, 1989: 259) and was endorsed by the historical consultant V. G. Pashuto (Bird, 2004: 22).

an artist who created spiritual treasures of timeless significance" (quoted in Efir, 2007: 87). The original screenplay seemed to comply with the requirements of the state-favoured style of 'soviet realism' and to at least suggest the possibility of a hero in the soviet nationalist mode. Pashuto praised the screenplay's depiction of the heroism of the Russian people and how it showed them to be the source of Rublev's art (Williams, 1999: 12 and Bird, 2004: 22). In production these features were to be eroded, partly because of budgetary limitations⁷⁷, partly because of Tarkovsky's implacable stand to impose his own artistic vision on the material with the result that the narrative became more elliptical and Rublev himself became more passive (Johnson, 1994: 83). Because of this, on completion the authorities were alarmed that the film challenged the tenets of Socialist Realism and the official view of Soviet history (Youngblood, 1996: 127). They then used the well-tried technique of delaying the film's release to put pressure on Tarkovsky to re-edit the film into a more officially acceptable package. It is these delays that led foreign critics to see the film as an important statement of the role of the artist within current Soviet society.⁷⁸ In fact both Tarkovsky in Russia and Konrad Wolf in East Germany were supporters of the communist state and had little time for liberal capitalism. Controversy was stirred, in Tarkovsky's case, more because of the startling manner of his storytelling than by his ideological position (Bird, 2004: 7 and Faraday, 2000: 93). What both directors wanted was a return to a more ideologically pure regime and an end to what they saw as corruption and decadence so that the state bureaucracy was once more in close touch with the will of the people. The Hungarian critics Kovács and Szilágyi, with acute awareness of Soviet cultural and social issues, have noted how Tarkovsky saw Rublev as finally using his art to form a new bond with the community so that, on the one hand the people (who are religious, spiritual, moral and permanent) can be reconciled to power (which is brutal, exploitative and temporary) (cited in Johnson, 1994: 84). In *Goya* the

77 Where Tarkovsky was allocated one million roubles for a two-part film, preference was given to the safe but spectacular traditional classic adaptation of *War and Peace* to be directed by Sergei Bondarchuk, with a budget of eight million roubles (Bird, 2004: 24). This meant, for example, that the large-scale battle sequence at Kulikovo, where the Russians defeated the Tartars and established the nationalistic nature of the founding of the Russian state, which was planned as the opening sequence of *Andrei Rublev*, had to be abandoned (Williams, 1999: 14).

78 Tarkovsky (1994: 78) was very aware of the great gulf between his international standing as a film director and his official status within the USSR. He summed it up as "If anyone in Europe, or indeed anywhere, asks who is the best director in the USSR, the answer is TARKOVSKY. But here- not a word, I don't exist, I'm an empty space."

message was deliberately spelt out fairly crudely in the allegorical historical storyline. In *Rublev* it was far more a case of deduction. To the West the fate of Rublev himself became equated with Tarkovsky's fights to retain the integrity of his artistic vision (Johnson, 1994: 89-90). This was encouraged by such facts as Tarkovsky naming his diary his "Martyrologue" (Shlapentokh, 1993: 26). This viewpoint was extended to a communal level so that, for example, to the filmmaker Andrei Konchalovski the tribulations of Boriska directing the casting of the giant bell were taken as a metaphor for the task of Tarkovsky directing his film crew (cited in Bird, 2004: 60). Also the narrow-minded views of Theophanes on art and the underhand behaviour of Kyrill in betraying The Buffoon could be taken as equally applicable commentary on the role of contemporary Russian film directors towards Tarkovsky's work.

What is fascinating about *Andrei Rublev* is that Tarkovsky envisaged a film about the greatest icon painter in which the painter is never seen holding a brush, hardly shows any of his work until the very end of the film and relies on two or three conversations, two of them with a dead artist, to outline his views on art. Rublev himself is often not the focus of the action when he is there and is often absent from the scene altogether.⁷⁹ The figure of Rublev is deliberately made anonymous and physically distanced to ensure the viewer is kept at an emotional distance from the character. There are very few close-up shots. In addition, Rublev and his initial companion, Kyrill resemble each other and are often mistaken for each other by characters in the film as well as potentially by the film audience (Vandelanoitte, 2007: 35). While the artist's life is portrayed in eight distinctly titled chronological sequences, the coverage of his life is episodic, and not covered evenly.⁸⁰ Tarkovsky stated "We would like to depart from traditional dramaturgy with its canonical completeness and with its formal and logical schematism, which so often prevents the demonstration of life's complexity and fullness" (quoted in Bird, 2004: 12).

79 As early as his draft script of 1962 Tarkovsky had decided that "In our film there will not be a single shot of Rublev painting his icons. He will simply live, and he won't even be present on-screen in all episodes" (quoted in Bird, 2004: 37).

80 There is an untitled and undated prologue and epilogue, and in between eight dated and titled episodes. These episodes range from 1400-1423 but there is a large gap between number seven in 1412 and number eight set in 1423. About one-third of the film is devoted solely to 1408. What Western critics tended to forget when reviewing the film was that the cryptic and disjointed nature of the episodes simply reflected the way the Russian literary chronicles of the time were written, whose "principles of selection...are no longer obvious or rational to the modern reader" (Youngblood, 1996: 139).

What is haunting about the film is that it exists to suggest “the more impalpable aspects of the creative act; the birth and development of art within the mind of the protagonist” (Efird, 2007: 93).

Tarkovsky belongs to the school of directors that are unworried by historical inaccuracy as long as the correct emotional link is conveyed. He said: “In cinema it is necessary not to explain, but to act upon the viewer’s feelings, and the emotion which is awoken is what provokes thought” (quoted in Bird, 2004: 12). In the case of Rublev very little is known about the painter and to a large extent the director has a *tabula rasa* to work upon. Tarkovsky said “The meagreness of information about Rublev gives us a certain freedom. In the invented biography we have inserted our own conceptions, our ideas of art, we look at him from the twentieth century, from the standpoint of our own world outlook” (quoted in Ter-Ovanesov, 1965: 11).⁸¹ However, Tarkovsky is keen to ensure that a feeling for an accurate historical setting is retained, by the use of a simple a-historical time period as the setting. A suggestion of the medieval period is conveyed by the use of sheepskins and furs, log-fires, simple clothing for the monks, the plain white walls of a cathedral, the rough-hewn timbers of log huts, unwashed and sick people, barbarism and overall a repetition of his two favourite elements, water and earth, especially noticeable in the use of heavy rain and lots of mud. He was against a painstaking recreation of the times, wanting to avoid what Green (1993: 43) describes as any trace of “antiquated exoticism”.⁸² The use of black-and-white cinematography was linked to this requirement, in that it avoided any distracting prettiness (Johnson, 1994: 97). Tarkovsky was adamant that “historical accessories must not fragment the viewer’s

81 The little that is known of Rublev is that he was born between 1360 and 1370. He entered the Monastery of the Holy Trinity in Sagorsk, where he was instructed as an icon painter by Sergei Radonezjki. He moved to the Monastery of Andronikov in Moscow. His earliest authenticated work was at the Church of the Assumption in Zvenigorod in 1399. His first major commission was undertaken jointly with Theophanes the Greek at the Church of the Annunciation in the Kremlin in the Spring of 1405. In 1408 he decorated the Cathedral of the Dormition in Vladimir with his friend Daniel Tcherny. Less is known about his finest period from 1410-1420, which includes several icons at Zvenigorod. Only two of his later works survive, including his masterpiece *The Holy Trinity* at Sagorsk. He returned to Andronikov, where he died in January 1430 (Vandelanoitte, 2007: 33 and Bird, 2004: 13).

82 The film critic and filmmaker Ivor Montague was overwhelmed on first seeing the film in 1973, saying “Never have I seen so extraordinary and seamless conjunction of period and nature; buildings, people, clothing, fields and weather” (quoted in Le Fanu, 1987: 49).

attention" (quoted in Bird, 2004: 12).⁸³ In making the film look visually realistic Tarkovsky can be said to have made it too realistic to be pleasurable. The audience is meant to feel uncomfortable by the use of dirt, torture, squalid settings, and the muddy environment. Even small details exaggerate this impression, such as the swarm of ants crawling up Foma's filthy leg. While authentic locations were used for filming, they are not usually treated as separate sites, but through the careful use of tracking shots several locations are concatenated to appear a single entity. These locations are filmed exactly as they have survived into the twentieth-century, many in a very derelict state which adds to the sense of decay and chaos, but means they remain inauthentic in the terms of what they would have looked like in 1400 (Bird, 2004: 27 and Bird, 2008: 54).

Rublev's importance in Russian art history lies in his establishing a distinctly Russian style of holy representation as against the previously predominant Byzantine influence in icon painting. Tarkovsky makes this change in style quite clear in both his use of characters and in dialogues between Rublev and Theophanes the Greek and Daniil. The film shows three generations of artists, each representing a different stage of the artist's role (Green, 1993: 48). Theophanes's work is the pinnacle of the old traditional Byzantine order, which has depicted a retributionary deity, by illustrating scenes of the testaments which are calculated to frighten worshippers into observance of the church's commandments. Rublev, in contrast, emerges as the harbinger of the spirit of the Renaissance, where the new humanist values offer the use of compassion and understanding. By basing his scenes on gentle and contemplative subjects he is able to convey the peace and tranquillity of the human spirit, rather than attempt to frighten the viewer. Thirdly, just as Rublev was taken on by the master Theophanes to learn his trade, so at the end of *The Bell* episode Boriska is potentially artistically joined with Rublev. Boriska represents the new modern artist who may be wild and impulsive, but who, with some taming from Rublev, is the hope for the future.

83 Tarkovsky (1989: 78) went further, to say, "In order to achieve the truth of direct observation what one might almost term physiological truth, we had to move away from the truth of archaeology and ethnography".

The narrative part of the film is photographed in black and white and widescreen. Black-and-white was used to convey a more realistic setting, as for Tarkovsky colour suggested fictionality (Bird, 2004: 26). Tarkovsky said "For me cinematic reality exists in the terms of black and white" (Quoted in Bird, 2008: 155). There were also sound practical reasons in opting for black-and-white in that good quality Kodak colour film was strictly rationed and inferior Soviet quality film gave very garish colour effects (Woll, 2000: 195). The widescreen provided a horizontal plane, which Tarkovsky exploited with the careful draping of figures across the screen and the constant movement of figures towards the right of the screen. There is also a great depth of field with the most important action often taking place in the background, so it is very much left to the viewer to select the part of the frame on which to concentrate.⁸⁴

The use of colour is reserved for the film's climax when examples of Rublev's work are displayed in a relatively brief sequence of two hundred and fifty metres of film (Leong, 1984: 231). The wood smouldering in the brazier next to the newly cast bell is taken into close-up by the camera and the black-and-white image gradually turns to the red of the coals, conveying by association a warm and passionate feeling. This creates a slow transition from a world of darkness into a world of light. The contents of the burning brazier transmogrify into elements of bright colour, in very abstract patterns, which gradually identify themselves as small details from the icons. In fact the camera remains constantly on the move, using stills, close-ups, panning-shots and dissolves, providing only a partial view of the works, a bird here, a sleeve there.⁸⁵ The colour section climaxes in a brief view of the complete *Trinity* (c1410), Rublev's most famous work.⁸⁶ This stylistic device evolved from the cameraman, Vadim Yusov, finding that the horizontal framing of the widescreen made straightforward frontal reproduction of the vertically orientated

84 The most important difference between the 185 and 200 minute versions of the film is that Tarkovsky tidies up a number of ambiguities making the narrative causation more explicit and reducing the amount of fantasy. In doing this, Bird (2004: 35) suggests "Tarkovsky takes upon himself part of the work which he had originally entrusted to the viewer".

85 The sequence shows first a church, then a donkey; a vision of Christ; a scene of the disciples in a garden; Mary Magdalene stretched out on the ground; a dove ascending to heaven; Judas; the manger with Mary and the animals; and finally the *Holy Trinity* itself (Le Fanu, 1987: 41).

86 The details shown are also taken from Rublev's *The Last Judgement*, *The Entry into Jerusalem*, *The Nativity of Christ*, *The Raising of Lazarus*, *The Transfiguration*, *The Baptism of Christ*, *The Annunciation*, and *The Saviour in the Wood* (Leong, 1984: 231 and Johnson, 1994: 272).

icons impossible. He, rather than Tarkovsky, was left to experiment with moving the camera over the icons filmed in Russian museums to show both small details and subtle textures (Bird, 2008: 78).⁸⁷ Only *The Trinity* fitted the screen shape. Music is very important here in interpreting the mood and subject of the image on display. As each segment of an icon is displayed the soundtrack matches it with the music previously heard in the filmic episode which covered the date when it was painted. The final effect of the sequence, especially when it is completed by the appearance of horses rolling over on the grass in the rain, is far more involved than the original concept of what Tarkovsky said in his first screenplay would be to reproduce the icons "as in a popular scientific film" (quoted in Bird, 2004: 37). The whole sequence has an oneiric feel, moving from abstract colour patterns, to the magnificence of a complete icon that fits the widescreen frame, and on to the horses symbolising the unquenchable strength of the nation. Many critics have praised Tarkovsky for introducing such a powerful colour sequence as the film's climax⁸⁸ but the concept is not as original as often assumed, particularly in the Eastern Block. Tarkovsky was loath to recognise any debt to Sergei Eisenstein as he disapproved of the theory and practice of montage, but the colour sequence of *Ivan the Terrible* (1946) exhibits the same kind of abstract and dream-like effect.⁸⁹ Tarkovsky used the effect to provide what he said was the "connection between the final colour sequence and the black-and-white film...as a way to express the interdependence of Rublev's art and his life" (quoted in Bird, 2008: 155).

In contrast there is less of a puzzle to unravel for the audience with *Goya*. Here all the arguments are laid out for the viewer in simple and emphatic terms. The idea for the film was developed by film director Konrad Wolf and scriptwriter Angel Wagenstein after

87 Tarkovsky was very happy with Yusov's effects, saying "It's impossible to show Andrei Rublev's magnificent icons in such a short time, so we tried to create an impression of the totality of his work by showing selected details and guiding the viewer past a sequence of detailed fragments towards the highest of Rublev's creations, to the full shot of his famous *Trinity*" (quoted in Bird, 2008: 78).

88 For example, see Lawton (1991: 159), Le Fanu (1984: 41) or Leong (1984: 231).

89 Ivan eats dinner with the feeble-minded Vladimir while the *oprichniki* (the Tsar's personal corps of secret police) dance and sing for them. The effect is heightened by the use of an experimental 'Bi-Color', which only had blue and red shades, which lent it to abstract patterns formed in the dance (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0051790/trivia>). Accessed 29/03/2010. The film was not released until 1958. The Artificial Eye DVD release of *Andrei Rublev* permits a direct comparison of the Eisenstein sequence with the Tarkovsky.

the end of a period of relative liberalism in the GDR in December 1965.⁹⁰ Wolf and Wagenstein decided that the best way of combating the political freeze was to produce a *secret de Polichinelle* (open secret) whereby the audience and the authorities would be aware the portrayal of past times was meant to reflect on the current political situation, but were willing to turn a blind eye to the ruse as long as it was not publicly acknowledged. The life of their character Goya was therefore depicted in terms of an artist in conflict with those in power and freedom of expression versus persecution by the Inquisition, rather than an insight into artistic creation. The emphasis is on how the corruption of power and insanity of the Church matched the actions of the party bureaucracy in East Germany, while the decay of the Spanish monarchy represented the corrupt functionaries in the Socialist bloc.

Wolf and Wagenstein firmly believed in the original goals of the GDR and by the mid 1960s Wagenstein (2007) was depressed to see that “by that time they had already abandoned the true values of Socialism: individual freedom, justice, equality, brotherhood, but especially freedom...Artists had to trade in their freedom for material goods”. That the film was released at all, in spite of it being the most expensive film made by DEFA, was solely down to the high position that Wolf had risen to within the Party.⁹¹ It was to be the beginning of a sequence of ‘artist films’ that were made throughout the 1970s within DEFA exploring the alienation of the individual and the place of the artist in a socialist state. Wolf himself was to return to the issue, but this time in a contemporary setting, in *Der nackte Mann auf dem Sportplatz* (The Naked Man in the Stadium, 1974).⁹²

90 Twelve recently completed films were shelved and some films in production were stopped, most notably *Das Kaninchen bin ich* (I am a rabbit, Kurt Maetzig) and *Denk bloss nicht ich heule* (Don't think I am crying, Frank Vogel). Together these became known as the *Verbotsfilme* (forbidden films) or the *Regalfilme* (shelved films) or ‘Rabbit films’, and most had to wait until 1989 for release and the ‘Wende’ (reunification of East and West) (Berghahn, 2000: 446).

91 Vasili Baskakov, Soviet Vice-Minister for Cinema, demanded a private viewing of the film and was disturbed that the film's ending, with Goya forced into exile, would imply even more public criticism of a similar sentence recently passed on Solzhenitsyn. Wolf overrode the doubts by virtue of his Presidency of the East German Academy of the Arts (1965-1982), his membership of the Central Politburo of SED and his strong family ties with other leading party members (Wagenstein, 2007).

92 The conflict between government and artist came to a head in 1976 when the singer Wolf Biermann was expatriated for criticising the GDR when on a concert tour in the Federal Republic. This action led to a drain of the major talent from the GDR which was to be felt for years to come (Allan, 1999a: 15).

All of Wolf's work is strongly autobiographical.⁹³ With *Goya* he was commenting directly on his own experience of censorship and state interference.⁹⁴ It can therefore be seen as Wolf's way of coping with his humiliation and re-establishing his confidence. In this film and in *Der nackte Mann*, Wolf can be seen to be walking his own "hard road", sharing some of the common sufferings as Rublev had done, and exhibiting what Wagenstein (2007) saw as "the ideal of enlightenment through the art of the cinema". He was able to sell the idea for the film on the basis of a revival of DEFA's commitment to period dramas which had been prominent in the 1950s. There was at the time a general tendency towards the production of historical films throughout the European art cinema, though DEFA's were more traditional and treated their subjects in a conservative manner (Berghahn, 2005: 102). However, this conservatism in style only hid the general dissidence in content and the Soviet block audience were experienced at reading between the lines and extracting any political subtext. *Goya* can be seen as epitomising what Berghahn (2005: 105) describes as "DEFA's heritage films employ the dual strategy of, on the one hand, supporting the cultural legitimisation of the GDR as the true heir of German culture, while on the other hand utilising costume drama as camouflage to voice critical subtexts about contemporary society". The spectacle, as in *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, was of a static kind, with much screen time spent on religious processions and formal court assemblies, which does not drive the narrative forward. Both travelogue montages of beautiful countryside and stops for the clichés of a Flamenco display and a bullfight also deflect from the story and the impact of Goya's artworks.⁹⁵ However, Wolf wanted to convey authenticity and was prepared to authorise work that was recognised

93 Horst Claus (1999b: 657-658) has classified Wolf's oeuvre into four groups according to theme. Group 1 is anti-fascist and coming to terms with the Nazi past e.g. *Genesung* (Convalescence, 1956) or *Professor Mamlock* (1961); Group 2 is his war experiences and German/Russian relations e.g. *Ich war neunzehn* (I was nineteen, 1967); Group 3 deal with state interference and censorship, as in *Goya*; and Group 4 are set in and comment on contemporary life in the GDR e.g. *Solo Sunny* (1979).

94 Wolf openly defended the director of one of the *Verbotsfilme*, Frank Beyer, in a letter which reminded the authorities that the initial decision to release the withdrawn film, *Spur der Steine* (Trace of the Stones), was a collective one, and that Beyer was being unjustly treated as a scapegoat. Even Wolf, with all his Party connections, was not allowed to get away with this. Even though he was President of the Academy of Arts, he had to subject himself to 'self-criticism' and publicly recant his views, admit his flawed judgment and admit that Beyer's suppressed film was in fact an attack on the Party. To carry on working he had also to beg for an opportunity to make amends through his future artistic work (Berghahn, 2005: 157).

95 Franco would not allow any filming in Spain but a small crew were smuggled in as West Germans to film the authentic bullfight footage (Wagenstein, 2007). The Madrid scenes were shot in Dubrovnik.

as not making any difference to the viewer, but which added to the realism for the actors and crew.⁹⁶

There is a considerable difference in the approach to Goya's work between parts one and two of the film. Goya's initial attitude is to treat his ability to paint as rather a joke in Part One, as it and the rewards of life come easily for the painter and there is an emphasis on his debauchery and high jinks with the royal family and bedroom romps with the Duchess of Alba. However, as Goya becomes more entangled with the political resisters to the Church and the monarchy, so there is more emphasis on a close relation between his artistic output and his awareness of his embedded beliefs. The horrors of civil-war and of the methods of the Inquisition are portrayed in extended montages of the original works, which create powerful blocks of nightmarish images, bringing a contrasted bleakness into the vibrant coloured world of the Court and preparing the audience for Goya's turning from the hedonistic and corrupt world of Madrid to face an uncertain future in the North.

With its big screen, big budget and spectacle *Goya* was a box-office success in East Germany attracting 1.1 million spectators, and was the first DEFA film to gain a commercial release in the USA (Buffet, 2007: 219-220). Its current reputation has arisen from a general reappraisal of Wolf's career. For example, Claus (1999: 657) rates him as "Internationally the most renowned GDR film director". Wagenstein (2007) believes that in their enthusiasm to use the film as a vehicle for political comment, in the screenplay he and Wolf "put on the political message too thick", which deterred audiences. The film is slow-moving and lacks narrative drive and often seems to stop to deliver a lecture. The 'hero' and 'heroine', that is Goya and the Duchess of Alba, now seem very much figures of the 1960's in both presentation (make-up and hair style) and attitude. What still resonates is the film's political message and much of this longevity can be ascribed to the successful integration of Goya's politically inspired paintings and drawings. To take just one example in detail, the second interrogation of Goya by the Inquisition. The fierce

⁹⁶ The lithographs were considered so fine that they were accepted for the permanent collection of a museum in Prague, while the reproductions of Goya's paintings went on display at an art gallery in Potsdam (Wagenstein, 2007).

verbal dual between Goya and the Cardinal over distribution of Goya's *Caprichos* lithographs climaxes with the following exchange, so reminiscent of Wolf's experiences before Party committees:

Cardinal: Whom do these works serve? Do they serve the well-being of the Church?

Goya: They serve...the truth.

Cardinal: If I understand correctly, you distinguish between the Church and the truth?

(Goya struggles to reply and the Cardinal repeats the question, loudly, in anger).

Goya: The Church is above truth (Goya looks old, shifty, frightened).

Cardinal: A curious answer, extremely curious.

(Goya uses his deafness as an excuse to avoid further verbal questioning. The Cardinal resorts to written questions).

Goya: The demons...

A montage of details from the *Caprichos* begins, announced by the sudden introduction of the loud foot tapping rhythm of the flamenco, which reminds the audience that the following sequence nominally relates to the condition of Spain. The intensity of the music also reinforces the emotional impact of the visual images. The sequence begins with a switch to black and white images of witches on a broomstick, suggesting both unbelievable horror but at the same time an authenticity by the simple uncoloured line drawing. Then there is inserted a return to the head and shoulders of the Inquisitor who is dressed in brilliant blood red robes before a return to the black and white drawings, this time of monsters with bird heads. The crude juxtaposition of the Cardinal against the birds is very reminiscent of Eisenstein mounting the clockwork peacock against Kerensky in *October*. Wolf uses such montage twice more in this sequence. While showing the *Caprichos* the camera is never still, picking out details to fill the 70mm print large screen. When the camera returns to the Inquisition room it is still, as a series of tableaux are mounted, and the loud music stops suddenly as well, suggesting Goya's sitting in his isolated internal silence, in turmoil waiting for some kind of verdict.

Andrei Rublev bears little resemblance to a standard biographical film, especially to a standard socialist realist biography (Eford, 207: 86). This is a result of Tarkovsky's artistic and ideological viewpoint rather than the political demands placed

upon the film. In comparison to such a unique work, *Goya* appears very traditional. However, it is not a simple 'cradle to grave' biographical approach, as it concentrates on only a few years in the artist's mid-life, and places its emphasis on his politicisation rather than his art, although his art is used to intertwine the two by the end of the film. Both utilise spectacle, and indeed used it as both a sales tool to get the subject accepted and as a marketing tool to attract an audience. While the spectacle is very formal within *Andrei Rublev* and the audience is deliberately distanced from events on the screen, in *Goya* the large-scale set pieces are unashamedly scrofolific. Both find a way to explore the contemporary dilemmas and difficulties of the artist within a historical framework. In the case of *Rublev* this led to delays in release and state interference in its content whereas for *Goya* the contemporary political allusions were allowed to pass as it went on to a worldwide commercial success.

2.5. Radical artists on a shoestring: the British artist biopic 1972-1974

There came together in the mid 1970s a particular set of circumstances that resulted in the production of three British artist biopics that can be labelled as 'radical' in several senses. The three productions in question were *Savage Messiah* (Russell, 1972) about sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska (1891-1915), *A Bigger Splash* (Hazan, 1974) about painter David Hockney (b.1937-), and *Edvard Munch* (Watkins, 1974) about the Norwegian artist (1863-1944). These films were radical in subject and style, and they were the creations of three maverick film directors who brought a very distinctive personal approach to their material. Despite, or perhaps rather because of, very low budgets which in turn ensured an ability to work without any outside interference, there was a flowering of what can be argued are the most innovative, and to some extent also still the most technically accomplished, artist biopics ever made. This Section will analyse how they came to be filmed, what features they had in common and also what made them distinctive, together with the legacy they have provided for subsequent films in the genre. There will also be an extended discussion of how the actual art produced by these artists was reproduced so very differently in each of the three films.

Each of the projects had been of long gestation although all three directors were immensely enthused with their subject, and for two out of the three there was a close identification of the director with the views and experiences of the artist subject, very much as if the artist was an alter ego of the director. Ken Russell had the longest enchantment with an artist in that he had read H. S. Ede's biography of Henry Gaudier-Brzeskia, *Savage Messiah*, when he was a struggling ballet dancer and, without exaggeration, found the experience life-enhancing. In his autobiography, Russell (1989: 80) describes how "The only thing that kept me going in those dark days was the spirit of Gaudier-Brzeska".⁹⁷

Watkins was introduced to the work of Edvard Munch for the first time in 1968, when he attended a retrospective of his own work at the Edvard Munch Museum in Oslo. Again, he felt an immediate affinity with the artist and vowed to make a film about him in the future.⁹⁸ The similarities in the two men's lives, which may have drawn Watkins to Munch, are fairly obvious, with both suffering strong critical attack, demeaning censorship and self-exile (Picard, 2005: 62). From being the 'golden boy' of British documentary for *Culloden* (1964) it was a short step to the rejection of *The War Game* (1965) by the BBC and subsequent notoriety. This was followed by a critical mauling and poor box-office for the feature film *Privilege* (1967) and an uprooting to Sweden in 1968.

Only Jack Hazan was more of the opportunist. On being shown the catalogue of Hockney's Whitechapel Gallery exhibition in 1970 he immediately felt here was a cutting-edge artist who would make an ideal candidate to provide himself with an entrée into feature film as against short documentary film making, and he was prepared to invest his free-time over the next three years bringing this to fruition.⁹⁹ His enthusiasm is shown in

97 Russell (1989: 80) also found the book "an inspiration to anyone down on their luck with a belief in their own talent, despite the hostility of those who should know better". He had attempted to buy the rights to Ede's book while still working at the BBC, but they had already gone to an American producer. However, in 1971 Ede wrote to Russell to inform him that the American option had now lapsed and Russell purchased the film rights immediately (Phillips, 1979: 113).

98 Watkins said (1977: 17) "I remember sensing a very strong connection with Munch's experience, on the most personal level – sexual fear and inhibition, need, yearning, a remembrance of brief moments lost for ever, and half a life of aching, and longing...and from that moment, I knew that I would make a film about this man, because, in that way, I knew that I would also be making a film about myself".

99 Hazan says he recognized that "This artist is going to be huge. I must make a film about him. I must find out what lies behind these extraordinary pictures" (Webb, 1988: 116).

his decision to film the Whitechapel show in Rotterdam before it was dispersed, despite Hockney's initial refusal to co-operate (Webb, 1988: 116).

In each of the three films the director was able to work completely to his own vision without external interference. This was largely because without rigid unionised work structures relatively small film units could be used and the film funded on a hand-to-mouth basis. Ken Russell double-mortgaged his home to finance *Savage Messiah*, with a budget of \$750,000 (Hanke, 1984: 180).¹⁰⁰ He had experienced widespread studio interference on his last two big budget films, *The Devils* (1971) and *The Boy Friend* (1971) and he relished the idea of now making a small-scale film, in effect returning to his roots in the type of study he had made for his series of TV documentaries of composers and performers, all very definitely 'Bohemian' artists (Gomez, 1976: 166 and Lanza, 2007: 136). He said, "I mean it's as small as can be" (quoted in Buckley, 1972: 14). The approach to his subject was, however, bound to be rather different to his other work as Gaudier died young and was often oblivious of his surroundings, so there was less attempt to interpret the work through the subject's life and environment and this was replaced by the vision of art being 'bloody hard work'. Gaudier was a 'doer' rather than a thinker.¹⁰¹ The tight budget only allowed for ten weeks filming.¹⁰²

Jack Hazan also mortgaged his house and was able to borrow equipment from the BBC, and could juggle his time-consuming filming and attendance among the Hockney entourage around his self-employed business at Solus Enterprises.¹⁰³ He made do with a

100 It turned out that although Russell had to find the money to put up front, once the film was completed and ready for release, then MGM, who had financed Russell's previous film *The Boyfriend*, did agree to distribute it and to refund his expenditure as part of the deal (Lanza, 2007: 136). Russell (2000: 21) joked that "I'm now living in a small cottage in the provinces. The fact that the film is a masterpiece is ample compensation".

101 As Russell suggested, "He'd push a pen, wield a pick, pick fights, make enemies, contradict himself and work twenty hours a day to fulfill his vision" (quoted in Baxter, 1973:22).

102 Even then, every small expenditure still had to be carefully approved. For example, only non-copyright Russian recordings were used for the soundtrack music to avoid copyright fees, which gave Stuart Baird, the Sound Editor, the job of removing all scratches and imperfections (Baxter, 1973: 51, 71). The film interiors were shot at the grand sounding Lee International Studios, but the working atmosphere there was in practice more that of a cottage industry. The buildings were in fact just a derelict biscuit factory next to a stagnant canal in North London rented out by John and Benny Lee, two successful Cockney electrical contractors with a love of the cinema (Russell, 1989: 81 and Baxter, 1973: 54).

103 All biographical details are taken from a brief biographical outline included in the collection of press releases for *A Bigger Splash* held at the British Film Institute Library, London.

team of only three for filming, which as well as keeping costs to a minimum also meant the unit was not too obtrusive and it soon became just part of the furniture for the participants, helping to keep their performances quite natural.

Peter Watkins' finance for *Edvard Munch* was hard won from the Scandinavian TV networks.¹⁰⁴ Once modestly financed, then Watkins was left free to develop his own approach, even though this approach was in the end to prove not to the TV companies' taste. Watkins became so immersed in his research towards the film that he requested six months for finishing his work in the Munch archives (Gomez, 2007: 10). He was unusual in that he took on the role of art historian, carefully examining the Munch archives, in particular making the first detailed use of Munch's diaries. He did discover new facts and facets to Munch's character, which he included in his film. In particular, Watkins discovered who Munch's lover, known only as 'Mrs Heiberg' in the diaries, actually was, together with full details of their six-year affair.¹⁰⁵ This significant relationship, indeed perhaps the most crucial in terms of Watkin's interpretation of influences on Munch, had been ignored by previous scholars and the diaries generally rather dismissed because of their difficult structure.¹⁰⁶ Passages from the diaries form much of the accompanying narration in the film and even contribute to the dialogue. It will be argued in a later paragraph about Watkin's editing technique that to some extent the editing consciously echoes the style of the diaries as an appropriate form for portraying the private world of the artist.

All three directors had a common background in the making of documentary films and were greatly influenced by their experiences in the medium. For Russell and Watkins the advice and support provided by Huw Wheldon as both Commissioning Editor and anchorman of *Monitor*, a fortnightly Sunday evening arts magazine, and as Head of

104 At first the project was to be a joint production of the Documentary Department of Norsk Rikskringkasting (NRK) and the Drama Department of Sveriges Radio. However NRK's Documentary Department dropped out on seeing the screenplay and the gap was only plugged by the NRK Drama Department after several months of negotiations (Gomez, 2007: 9).

105 Gomez (2007: 13) found the only scholar to mention Mrs Heiberg was Reinhold Heller, in his *Edvard Munch: 'The Scream'*, London: Allen Lane, 1973. This was a brief reference to suggest that Munch's jealousy showed how Hans Jaegers' notion of free love did not work.

106 Their main feature was a lack of punctuation with only hyphens being used, together with a rapid change of subject that mixed past and present in seamless blocks of text, and continual changes from first to third person viewpoint.

Documentary Programming at the BBC, was vital. Russell was a regular contributor.¹⁰⁷ Watkins was appointed to an Assistant Producer's post at the BBC, where he made his name with *Culloden* (1964) and *The War Game* (1965) (Gomez, 1979: 33), which continued the political proselytising of his amateur efforts, a feature that is absent from Russell's programmes. Watkin's debt to Russell has been emphasised by commentators (e.g. Gomez, 2007: 11 and Hobbs, 2007: 3), while at the same time recognising that Watkins' personal style is the very antithesis of Russell's, with the latter's extravagance very much being judged as the lesser of the two styles because of its vulgarity. Russell's output had gradually changed the whole image of the biopic. He took it out of the straight-laced factual TV documentary spectrum or pre-packaged standard anemic Hollywood product and added a multi-viewpoint, in which the romantic self-view of the subject, a more 'objective' view or the director's personal vision could be juggled into prominence according to the 'right' moment in the narrative. Watkins was able to build on this already complex liberalisation of the form. To Russell's mixing of facts, speculations and visually stunning images he was to add a political slant, a multilayered soundtrack including a multi-tier narration. He also elevated an original preference for non-professional 'actors' to be an essential requirement of his technique. Only Watkins was committed by his political and artistic beliefs to remaining within the documentary field.¹⁰⁸ Russell had been happy to move on to feature films to develop his style and interests on a larger scale, while Hazan never had much interest in TV even though he made his living from it, and always wanted to be a feature film director.¹⁰⁹ In his spare time he had produced and directed two short documentary films about artists. Neither of

107 He originally attracted Wheldon's attention for his prize winning short *Angela and the Angel*, a Cocteau-esque fantasy. Watkins also won prizes for his amateur efforts *The Diary of an Unknown Soldier* (1959) and *The Forgotten Faces* (1961), a reconstruction of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. He honed his craft, particularly realising the power of editing, at a London advertising agency, George Street and Company, which made thirty and sixty second spots for commercial television (Gomez, 1979: 20).

108 Indeed, Hart (<http://davidhart.com/Warfilms/Study Guides/Culloden.html> Accessed 02/05/2014. Page 1.) has commented that "Watkins is often compared to George Orwell in his commitment to the problems of individual freedom in an oppressive and conformist world, while Gomez (1979 passim) compares him to William Blake, acting as a political visionary rather than a simple political reformer.

109 In an interview in 2004, Hazan (2004: 2) said "I've never been interested in TV, although I've made my livelihood from it. I've always looked down on it, maybe I've sneered at it... But I've never wanted to do anything other than cinema. I've never even directed in television. Well, maybe once, a lapse. I've had one, maybe two lapses. But I've never really wanted to, I've always wanted to see things of mine on the big screen".

these works had suggested that his work was of any great merit.¹¹⁰ It is important to emphasise at this stage that Hazan was not affiliated to any film movement and did not see himself as part of the British 'avant-garde'. For example, he had no connections with the London Film Makers Co-Op and the work of Le Grice. He was a maverick, working on his own and scraping together finance for film stock and other expenses as the need arose, including mortgaging his house.

Russell's *Savage Messiah* is the least innovatory of the three pictures, but it does show the full maturation of the director's style. It may be a return to what is for Russell a very gentle style of film making as in the series of television biographies of bohemians, but it has new features compared to them. It is in colour for a start, unlike the earlier TV work. It is Russell's opportunity to show what hard physical work the life of an artist entails let alone the emotional turmoil of producing the creative ideas for new masterpieces. When first working for *Monitor* Russell had been expressly prohibited by Wheldon from using actors or staging scenes, as Wheldon felt it was false. It took a long process of attrition for Russell to gradually overturn this ruling.¹¹¹ What Russell wanted more than accuracy was to find the core element in a subject's personality that would help explain their artistic output to the world at large. Having found this, he wanted to eschew the traditional voice-over format of the documentary and developed "an innovative pushing at the boundaries that separated documentary and drama, breaking the taboo against the fusion of the two" (Mulvey, 2007a: 10).¹¹² This results in an

110 His first effort, *Especially at My Time of Life* (1966, 35 minutes) followed four artists living in a studio colony, the Camden Arts Centre, in Camden Town, London. Adrian Turner (1975: 324) saw the film on release and thought, "The film was professionally made, though unbearably pretentious. I was never certain if it was intended as a 'Peud's Corner' send-up or that it took itself and its subjects seriously. Either way it was pretty terrible since its director, Jack Hazan, had fallen headlong into all the conventions that stifle the form". The second short, *Grant North* (1969, 15 minutes), was in colour and featured the work of painter Keith Grant and included location work in Norway. It gained some recognition as it included appearances and music by Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears, who commissioned work by the artist at The Snape Maltings, Aldeburgh. This had a very limited cinema release and was also shown on both BBC and Norwegian television (BFI Library Press Cuttings Collection).

111 As Dickinson comments (2007: 71), "Little by little, Russell edged impersonation into the material he provided for the series in an attempt to dismantle the barriers blocking theatrical modes of expression from attaining the status of the historical document". The final turning point was *The Debussy Film* (1965), where Melvyn Bragg as scriptwriter envisaged a film within a film, whereby the actors could freely invoke Debussy's words and actions.

112 Dickinson (2007: 73) suggests Russell 'got away' with this stylistic experimentation because his documentaries were based around music. Mulvey (2007a: 10) places great importance on the position of individual landmark productions within the TV schedules. *Monitor* fitted comfortably into its Sunday night slot and Russell's early biographies were suitable content for such fare.

essential element of conflict, as Russell plays off three levels of interaction around his subject. There is the historical personage based on well-known facts; there is the mythological figure created around the historical and there is "Russell's own vision of the subject, which exaggerates the historical figure in order to play it off against the myth" (Kolker, 1973: 42). In doing this Russell draws on the traditions of both the factual biography on film (e.g. *Scott of the Antarctic*, Charles Frend, 1948) and the familiar Hollywood popularisations (e.g. *The Life of Emile Zola*, William Dieterle, 1937) but he works on them to form a third way, providing, as Gomez (1976: 17) suggests, "complex experiments involving form and structure which force the viewer to reconsider the very nature of the biopic genre".

Hazan was more interested in narrative drive. He wanted to tell a story that would both entertain a feature film audience and help explain the motivation of the artist in question. At the same time he wanted the audience to believe that the film was giving them an authentic insight into the world of an artist. A rapid montage of press cuttings, photographs and works of art outlining the life of and artistic development of Hockney precedes the credits of *A Bigger Splash*. This thumbnail sketch may be a good *aide-memoire* for those in the know but is too rushed and selective to mean much to the uninitiated. However, it does provide an air of well researched and impartial observation, which can add to the perceived authenticity of the film to follow. All the leading strands of Hockney's work to date are featured except for the double portraits, which are being reserved for important use later in the film. Overall there is a feeling of the artist becoming submerged by all the publicity; that the man is of more interest than his works. The sequence culminates in the arrival of the painting *A Bigger Splash*: first of all in long shot, then filling the screen. Finally there is a zoom down onto the splash itself in the water. This is to be a key visual and aural metaphor¹¹³. The film will make explicit just how

113 Sound effects and music play a vital role in emphasising the melancholy atmosphere of the film, a sense of gentle *tristesse*. A loud splash is heard as the painting, *A Bigger Splash*, is first shown, and this sound is repeated whenever the film returns to the sun-soaked pools of California. It is immediately followed by the first introduction of the main theme music written by Patrick Gowers, which always begins very quietly but gradually builds up to a shattering climax, usually followed by a contrasted period of silence. This music as leit-motif avoids the use of much dialogue and becomes a shorthand for emotional disturbance, and can make up for many shortcomings in the amateur actor's performances, while remaining true to both Hockney and Hazan's preferred use of close-ups of blank faces arguably hiding their emotions beneath the surface.

much of Hockney's first long-term love affair with Peter Schlesinger, which has just ended, remains potent in his life and emotions. In a comparable way to the viewer having to consider what trace of the diver, who has now gone out of view under the water, is left in the painting, so Hazan turns his lens on Hockney and gradually discovers what a deep effect the removal of Peter from Hockney's daily life has on the painter (Turner, 1975: 324). We are soon made aware that Hockney's emotional state is going to be of equal importance to his art as in the first ten minutes two voice-overs by Mo McDermott¹¹⁴ fill the audience in on Hockney's fragile condition. We are informed that 'Peter' has gone and Hockney is devastated. However, no details about Peter are offered to the viewer. The facts about the Hockney/Schlesinger relationship in the film have to be assumed from scraps of information, rather as in real life where odd bits of information are overhead in conversations. Again this is a way of ensuring the audience feels the scenes are authentic and true, which will be shown to be far from the case in many particulars¹¹⁵.

Hazan's *A Bigger Splash* was to change radically over its three years of production. It began as a straightforward record of happenings while Hazan was allowed around Hockney.¹¹⁶ During this time, Margaret Tarratt, the film critic, noted that 'Gradually, however, the idea evolved of making a documentary which would be shot to look like a feature film, a feature film with the authenticity and 'reality' of a documentary' (Tarratt, 1975: 36). Then, as Hazan was at the flat even when not filming, he came to realise that the very emotional break-up of the live-in relationship between David Hockney and Peter Schlesinger was being played out in front of him, and a new approach to the

114 Mo McDermott had studied fabric design alongside Hockney's equally close friend and muse Celia Birtwell at Salford College of Art. He met Hockney in London while working as a model and, through Hockney, became the only male model at the Royal College of Art. He graduated from being a regular sitter for Hockney to becoming his full-time studio assistant. In the film he is shown both as working assistant and close personal friend. He later moved to Los Angeles and he died in 1988 ('Notes', 2006: 230).

115 Hockney was 29 when he met Peter Schlesinger who was a student on Hockney's two-month course in drawing at the University of Southern California in 1966. Schlesinger became Hockney's first live-in lover soon after this, and accompanied him back to England in 1968 and enrolled at the Slade School of Fine Art in London. Hockney confirmed, "Peter and I lived together. Peter is the only person I've really lived with; we were lovers. And of course it makes a difference; life was a little quieter" (cited in Stangos, 1976:151). The relationship began to unravel in 1970 just about the time that Jack Hazan first approached Hockney about being filmed, though Hazan was unaware of the true situation when he began filming.

116 Hazan declined to take 'No' for an answer from Hockney and kept turning up and asking for more filming, until the small team of three filmmakers became an everyday part of life at Hockney's flat and studio in 17 Powis Terrace, Westbourne Park, Kensington.

material being gathered began to emerge. Hazan and his business partner and co-editor David Mingay took the decision to fictionalise real life and give the film a definite narrative path if what had been filmed as it happened did not have what they considered sufficient dramatic forward movement (Hazan, 2006). This had two great advantages for them as filmmakers. Firstly, it transformed a simple documentary into a potentially more saleable dramatic feature film for cinema exhibition. Secondly, it meant that while it was not possible either to always be present at or to start filming when dramatic events took place, it would be possible to recreate equally valid emotional scenes using the original players, to unfold a parallel but fictional narrative for public view. Hazan has insisted that all the sequences he invented for the film 'could have happened'. He believes that their validity is not weakened by their having been thought up by himself within the context of his knowledge of the 'actors' and the real life situation (Tarratt, 1975: 36) because he had been around the people involved for often three or four days a week and had got to know them intimately and could envisage both the type of scene they could be involved in and their likely reactions to the situations (Ryman, 1975: 12).¹¹⁷

Hazan's narrative for *A Bigger Splash* changed over time. At first he had "David Hockney trying to paint and not being able to. I didn't know what the reasons for his being unproductive and not painting were when I started. It was only after about a year that I realised it had to be this broken love affair" (cited in Ryman, 1975: 10). The conclusion of the story was to be that Hockney was so disillusioned with his painting and the loss of Peter that he gave up painting altogether (Robinson, 1974: 37 and Ryman, 1975: 10). This ending was finally pared down in the editing stage to Peter's leaving giving Hockney a short term painter's block and a general depression causing him to go missing for a time in New York, and needing to get away from everyone, even his closest friends, after the opening of his New York show at the Emmerich Gallery.¹¹⁸

117 A full account of the use of performance in *A Bigger Splash* can be found in Bovey (2011) which is included in the Publications section of the thesis.

118 Hockney, at the time of the film's release, suggested the final content and style of the film was only determined in the film's editing stage, which took Hazan and Mingay six months. Hockney (1975: 9) said "in all fairness I think he [Hazan] had no idea [of the sort of film he was going to make] when he began. I think he'd no idea when he was halfway through the film. He'd probably not much idea at the end either. It was done very surreptitiously without people knowing". This has to be something of an exaggeration as the film contains so many staged scenes where Hazan must have had a definite result in mind. He said, "I

For Watkins, there was no question that the documentary was his preferred form of film making, as he felt this gave him the greatest possible contact with his audience, making them work at interpreting his sound and images, so that they were as involved in the filmmaking process as the cast and crew. This preference was coupled with the consistent use of amateur actors, allowing filming to proceed in a very Brechtian manner with the use of 'talking heads' gazing directly into camera making both the actor and the audience very aware of the presence of the camera.¹¹⁹ The heads tend to be in extreme close-up with the top of the head often cut-off the frame, unlike the carefully framed and full-head close-ups of classic Hollywood cinema. *Edvard Munch* uses characters staring out of the screen straight at the audience not just in interviews but also throughout the film. Its greater use can easily be justified by comparison to Munch's paintings where, even if family members find it impossible to look directly at one another, they can stare directly out of the frame communicating their feelings to the viewer. With Munch himself, a very introverted individual, such non-verbal clues to his current emotional state are essential to link the viewer sympathetically to the painter. However, Geir Westby as Munch does maintain a very blank expression and the audience is as likely to attribute their own responses onto him as accept a state of mind being projected by him, which fits comfortably with Watkins' ideas as the last thing he wants is for the audience to be passive. His theories of filmmaking are centred on removing what he terms a "fourth wall" or "the elitist barrier in films that acts as a separation between actor and viewer, and between filmmaker and viewer" (quoted in Gianvito (n.d.: 1). As with *A Bigger Splash*, the narration also offers strong clues to the feelings being conveyed and can help overcome any shortcomings in the emotive powers of the amateur performers.

For *Edvard Munch* two new features are added to Watkins' repertoire of stylistic characteristics. Firstly, there is a constant repetition of key images. The picture of Munch's mother coughing up blood and of Mrs Heiberg gently nuzzling Munch's neck like

never wanted to shoot more than I actually shot. I did stay at it for three years – which is a long time- until I knew that I had exactly what I wanted" (cited in Ryman, 1975: 13).

119 While Watkins uses many of the same methods as filmmakers aiming for *cinéma vérité*, crucially he does not make his nonprofessional actors ignore the camera, as he is striving to remove the barriers between the film and the audience, not simply between the subject and the camera (Gomez, 1979: 37).

a vampire are returned to over and over again, so they become the equivalent of a musical leitmotiv. They anchor the narrative, which is far from linear, for although based around the decade 1895-1905 events are depicted from childhood and from the future. Here it is important to remember the value Watkins assigns to serendipity, for his use of such 'memories' was often arbitrary, with him literally reaching behind him to a shelf and randomly taking one of the limited set of stock scenes and inserting it in the film at the editing stage (Hobbs, 2007: 3). As mentioned earlier, the editing techniques are in sympathy with the written style of Munch's diaries. They are also consistent with the visual style of the paintings, with their emphasis on his subjective experience. The cumulative effect of recurrent haunting memories and feelings was an attempt to render the pictures with a universal as well as a personal quality. The film strives for the same effect, being also based on cumulative effects.¹²⁰ It is the repetition and combination of shots that is important and involving rather than the isolated shots. They illustrate how key experiences forever haunted Munch and were always close to his consciousness. An attempt to ensure that the universal feelings exhibited in the paintings is accessed, even if the actual experiences shown were unique and individual to Munch himself. In this process Watkins felt he had "explored the limits (for me) of rapid montage" and would not want to repeat such a style in subsequent films (quoted in Gianvito, n.d.: 5).

Secondly there is a very complicated soundtrack mix of up to four layers.¹²¹ This layering gradually swells from a single track in the opening sequences to the four of the last sections. Sound may run over from the previous scene include a conversation from the current image, and include a musical accompaniment. The sound and the image if seen as a matrix are very complex and imply that more than a single viewing is required to appreciate the interactions within the film.¹²² One soundtrack layer that Watkins

120 Watkins (2005: 64) hopes "the structure would act as a liberating alchemical process within each person who saw the film- provoking and responding to his/her memories of childhood, family relationships, the men and women in their lives. My hope was that these personal memories, would intertwine with those of the filmmaker, and those of Edvard Munch, into a complex fusion of the three".

121 It is an appalling loss that the original multi-track soundtrack tapes were deliberately destroyed by RTI. The soundtrack on the DVD edition of the film has perforce been remastered from the best possible single-track copy that could be found.

122 The editing of the original television version of the film took Watkins eight months (Watkins, 1977: 17).

considered very important was the sounds of Munch actually at work creating his paintings and lithographs.¹²³

The use of narration is an outstanding feature of Watkins's work, which can operate in three voices. There is Watkins himself who, using a deadpan delivery in English, can be variously a storyteller, the actual annotator, the ironic commentator, or the omniscient observer. There is also in contrast the Munch narrator, with Geir Westby reading extracts from the diaries in Norwegian. The provision of regular sets of political, economic and social data about the milieu at first appears to be random, but again the accumulation of facts makes a pattern whereby Watkins suggests Munch's work portends the trials to come in Europe, in the growth of a social alienation and the preparation for the two World Wars.¹²⁴ The initial division between the English detached observations and the Norwegian limited first-person narration begins to break down as the film progresses with both exhibiting greater emotional commitment, what Welsh (1977:84) describes as a "kind of psychological blending",¹²⁵ The film also features a series of interviews by an off-screen interviewer.¹²⁶ Several of Munch's family are interviewed and for them the time period and context of the interviews is deliberately left vague. The audience is unsure if they are present or past within the narrative. The interview is also usually ended with the camera left on the family member's face in a long silence. External sounds may begin to overlap which reinforces the feeling that these images are constantly with Munch and feed into his paintings. Again, in these replicated memories

123 A microphone was placed only an inch or so away from a brush or pencil behind the canvas and the sound then mixed in at top level, so the brush work or palette knife or gouge being shown in extreme close-up on the screen was accompanied by a loud scratching noise on the soundtrack emphasising the physicality and anguish in the act of drawing. Watkins likes to switch off the soundtrack all together very suddenly in unexpected places, as for example in the middle of a beat on the music track. He does this in order "to take the audience over a cliff so they drop into a well of silence [which] is extremely tense" (quoted in Gomez, 2007: 37).

124 For example, in 1884 it is noted that Maxim invents the machine gun and Pearl Harbor becomes a U.S. naval base, while in 1885 General Gordon dies at Khartoum, Serbia invades Bulgaria, Karl Marx writes volume two of *Das Kapital*, and the future General Patton and D. H. Lawrence are born.

125 Welsh (1977: 84-85) takes this further and sees the blending as analogous to that achieved by Ingmar Bergman in *Persona* (1966), meant both as high praise and to suggest the rarity of the accomplishment. Walsh does acknowledge that in *Persona* the blending is slightly different in that the common consciousness lies between two participants in the action of the film.

126 For example at the beginning of the film each of a working class family is interviewed and a life of exploitation and poverty running parallel to the *haute-bourgeoisie* promenading on the Karl Johan is uncovered, exposing the hypocritical and corrupt society that was Christiania, and paying nodding acquaintance to the theories of both Freud and Marx (Picard, 2005: 62).

the family member looks directly out of the screen defiantly facing the audience, as in the paintings (Gomez, 2007: 28).

In the background when analysing Watkins' various techniques lies the essential implication that to a large extent the time restraints of television programming or the regular cinema movie can be ignored. The original television production of *Edvard Munch* was shown in two parts over three and a half hours. Watkins has said how "I wanted to give the audience *time* to work with the complex themes of life and relationships depicted in the film – a concept that is now strictly taboo in the media" (quoted in Gianvito, n.d.: 6).¹²⁷ The 'universal clock' of standard filmmaking is something to be deliberately avoided.

The three artist biopics show a very different treatment of the actors used in them. In *A Bigger Splash* we have real people playing themselves but placed in fictitious situations. They are the persons intimately involved in the life of David Hockney so the director could not choose who he used but had to accept the group who made up Hockney's circle of close friends. Hazan was lucky that in Hockney himself he had a ready-made charismatic star, well used to exploiting the media circus. David Hockney is the fulcrum of the film and to that extent his 'performance' determines its success. Hazan unhesitatingly stated that the film was "starring David Hockney" in the credits.¹²⁸ All other characters are listed as supporting players.¹²⁹ Hockney is to some extent humanised and

127 It is this version that I have used for analysis, as it is the only one currently available on DVD. Watkins also edited a version for cinema release. The shorter version is not simply a cut-down version of the original. Watkins was prepared to spend several weeks completely re-editing both the visual and aural elements to produce a more concentrated version (Gomez, 2007: 35-36). Watkins found Munch such a complicated character and discovered so many different issues and tangents to be explored that he was keen to allow a different set of interpretations to emerge through a new version. Some other commentators, such as Nolley (1987), only had access to the shorter version released in the USA. A detailed comparison of the two versions is given in Welsh (1977).

128 This credit still appears in the DVD version of the film, although at the time of first release Hockney made a great public fuss about wanting such a designation to be removed. Hockney (1975: 9) recalled in *Time Out* that after first seeing the picture, "The only thing I said to him [Hazan] was 'You must remove that'. I couldn't stand that; I didn't want to be a movie star. I just happened to appear by accident".

129 Roberts (1975: 301) has correctly summed up the situation, that Hockney "holds the film together because he is an excellent performer, shrewd, entirely unselfconscious and as confident as Old Nick." Two examples will suffice to indicate his ease and approachability. At the beginning of the film, titled "June 73", his conversation with Joe McDonald establishes both his humour and his 'niceness' when starting up a new relationship. Then, near the end of the film, when talking to Henry Geldzahler while perched on the side of Henry's bath, Hockney in best raconteur mode tells the hilarious story of his father sitting in an armchair

made likeable to the audience simply because the other half of the love relationship, Peter Schlesinger, is very silent and is treated more as a sex object rather than an equal partner. As Wilson (1975: 7) suggests, Peter is the one shown making love to another partner, cavorting naked in the Californian swimming pools with a shoal of beautiful young men, and dancing hypnotically around his studio dressed only in his underpants. This version of Peter is continued into Hockney's paintings, where Peter's passive posed positions suggests he remains more of an object of desire than a fully rounded personality.¹³⁰ The emphasis of the film is on Hockney's reaction to the relationship breaking up. Even the nude sequences mentioned above are Hockney's fantasies of what Peter is up to and how the Californian scene looks.

Hockney claimed no contribution towards the finished end product, maintaining that "It's nothing to do with me - I just appear in it", and "I didn't really make it; it's your film, Jack you can take all the credit and all the blame" (cited in Stangos, 1976: 287). This is very disingenuous. At the time of the film's release, Hockney, in reaction to the film exposing his private persona and relationships much more than he expected (or intended?), justified his disquiet by reiterating that he had been unaware of what kind of portrait Hazan was creating.¹³¹ Hazan (2006) has stated how 'game' Hockney was, willing to try anything and wanting to 'amuse' Hazan, whom he saw as a friend. For example, when Hazan requested that he film Hockney in his brand new shower, much more

outside a telephone booth awaiting replies to a 'For sale' advertisement in the local newspaper. There is a darker side to this sequence, as while Henry and David are talking we have brief images of other darkened rooms in the flat, in which can just be made out the presence of two young men: sex objects waiting to gratify the needs of the older powerful males in the brightly lit bathroom. The young men are reduced to 'harem status', in different rooms, locked in isolation (Wilson, 1975: 7 and Dvosin, 1974: 13).

130 Peter was to some extent able to put forward his own interpretation of the period via his collection of photographs, Schlesinger, Peter (2003) *A Checkered Past: A Visual Diary of the 60's and 70's*, N.Y.: Vendome Press.

131 For example, Hockney said, "as you well know, Jack, I didn't quite know what was going on in that film. That's why you said it's part fiction" (cited in Stangos, 1976: 287). He rather unkindly had thought that with "only three guys and one camera... it didn't look that professional to me...In fact it became a joke in the end. We just thought 'Oh, it's bloody old Jack back again with his camera, silly fool, what's he doing now?'. He expected the end result to be "rather amateurish, slightly out of focus" (quotes from Hockney, 1975: 9); "the sort of film where pictures revolve to bits of Bach" (cited in Robinson, 1974: 37); and where "We thought his film was going to be a twenty-five minute blurred film with bad sound, that it would be on at the Academy Cinema with a Polish version of Shakespeare" (cited in Webb, 1988: 140). I am uncertain if this last quote was really meant to be so ironic, in that Hazan's first short, *Especially At My Time of Life* (1966), had been shown at the Academy Cinema, London, in 1969 accompanying Jancsó's *Silence and Cry* (Gay, 1975: 58), albeit that the latter was Hungarian rather than Polish.

occurred than the clinical description given in Hockney's interview.¹³² The sequence begins with a lingering shot of the corridor in Hockney's flat in complete silence, allowing the expectation of something momentous to build up. Then, as music starts up Hockney appears from the left and he begins what amounts to a striptease as he half runs along the corridor in time with the music, and is naked well before reaching the shower room. Hockney then agreed to Hazan joining him in the shower to take multiple shots (having to make sure Hazan remained out of camera), including a tricky overhead sequence, and an extended shot of Hockney's head with his blond hair plastered to his skull, suggesting his inner torture over losing Peter Schlesinger. By now Hockney must have known that such a sequence could never be part of a standard biopic and that Hazan was also asking for specific actions and reactions rather than just taking what came without suggestion. As the musical accompaniment climaxes, the scene switches to Hockney's imagining of what Peter is currently doing, for example, indulging in poolside frolics in California; and the soundtrack goes silent for a moment until broken by a male call for Peter to join everyone in the pool; and then the sound of a dive into a pool.

What is unique to *A Bigger Splash* is that it succeeds in penetrating Hockney's media defenses to show what up until then had been the secret, private personality. Flanders (2006: 2) believes that even today "behind Hockney the celebrity and Hockney the poster boy is Hockney the artist". What Hazan also nailed in 1974 was Hockney the man. This was such a frightening revelation to Hockney that at first there was talk of not signing releases for the film or of forcibly buying up the negative from Hazan for £20,000 for it to be destroyed (Webb, 1988: 140 and Clark, 1998:10). However, Hockney soon listened to those whose opinion he respected, such as Shirley Goldfarb, David Robinson, and Claus Oldenburg, and let the film be shown.¹³³ What the spectator gains is on the one hand entrée to the familiar icon of the swinging sixties, shielded by peroxide hair, owl-rimmed spectacles and garish clothes, alternating with glimpses of a deeply committed

132 Webb (1988: 124) describes it simply as "In the film, he [Hockney] walks into his bathroom, takes off his underpants quite unself-consciously, examines himself in the mirror, and then takes a shower."

133 For example, Hockney respected Goldfarb as "She goes to see every film there is; nothing else to do." He reported that her opinion of the film was that "She thought it was wonderful and she said she thought it was the best film she'd ever seen about an artist creating pictures" (cited in Stangos, 1976: 286). Ossie Clark told Hockney: "You know David, you can't ignore this film, it's truer than the truth" (cited in Webb, 1988: 140). David Robinson told Hockney "It is a marvelous film" (cited in Stangos, 1976: 287).

and introspective artist (Turner, 1975: 324). Keith Roberts (1975: 301) suggests another avenue of analysis, in comparing the public persona of Hockney to that created by Noel Coward. Hockney "is like a well-known character out of fiction who has contrived to become a human being. He goes through the film with an aura of an advertisement for a commodity that has suddenly become fashionable. And as with Coward, there is just a hint that 'Hockney' is simultaneously what is being sold and the seller too." However much of the personality is revealed, in the end there still feels a reserve as if Hockney is holding something back. "Even when he takes all his clothes off he gives nothing away". Another David Hockney does emerge from the sybaritic progress, that of the caring, rather melancholy individual. This is shown most clearly in the scene where, after they have stopped living together, Hockney sketches the back of Peter Schlesinger's head in order to complete *The Balcony* picture. Hockney looks at Peter sadly and full of love. Peter, who cannot see Hockney, stares at the wall, angry, rebellious and feeling put upon. As David Robinson (1975: 9) suggests, "the act of sketching "becomes an expression of love as intense as any the cinema can show".

While Hockney is the 'star' performer in the film at this stage it is useful to consider the supporting cast. Here Hazan was dealing with persons either less used to or less adept at being in the spotlight. He was directing what were amateurs compared to Hockney, with his composure and experience. The results were certainly mixed but the awkward impression left by many of the cast's encounters does add to a feeling of authenticity: catching these people off-guard to expose their real selves. Hazan may very well have been acutely aware of such problems while filming, for the narrative is driven by a voice over from Mo McDermott, avoiding the need for too many dramatic moments to be enacted. Any deficiencies in acting were alleviated by this method and the rather blank expressions on the cast's faces at some key points in turn can be justified in that they simply reflect the stares of sitters in Hockney's portraits, where the meaning and underlying tensions are transmitted by the relationships of objects, colours and perspectives.

Hazan appears to have talked to the cast individually but not collectively.¹³⁴ He would give a character one question to ask of another to get the reaction he wanted (Hazan, 2006). One character did not know what the others were doing apart from the scenes they were in together. It was not a question of divide and rule but more of divide and obfuscate. As filming was also intermittent and could have long breaks for a cast member in between each shoot, the likelihood of piecing together what was being filmed was slight. Hazan was obviously keeping his intentions to himself in order to achieve a critical mass of film for editing. This was his way of protecting himself from the possibility of filming being stopped and all the long-term effort wasted, as he was so dependent on everyone's whims when it came down to actually filming. Only he knew the kind of emphasis a performance would be given and no member of cast saw any rushes before the final release print. This deliberately kept the amateurs in the character of playing themselves, as they had no opportunity to see whether they could or should alter their performance to nearer to the idea they themselves had of what they were playing.¹³⁵

This is a far cry from Peter Watkins' techniques in using an amateur cast. They were all hand picked and recruited via newspaper advertisements in Norway, partly chosen for their typage but also subjected to an intense examination of their interest in the painter and their beliefs in general.¹³⁶ Alf-Kåre Strindberg, chosen to play August Strindberg, turned out to be a direct descendant of the Swedish playwright (Gomez, 2007: 22). The amateur actors were closely involved in the development of the production,

134 This can be seen as 'best practice' when dealing with non-professionals. Joris Ivens says, "My experience has been that directions to non-actors who are playing together would usually be given to them separately, so that a certain amount of unrehearsed reaction can be counted upon" (cited in Waugh, 1990: 65).

135 Another way of representing the whole secondary cast is viewing them as the comic side of the film, providing a formal contrast to Hockney's romantic loss. Where the audience at the film's New York Film Festival premiere treated the film as a comedy with laughter throughout, the European audiences regarded it as a serious drama with 'high art' pretensions (Richmond, 1975: 7). In fact it is very funny for much of its running time. Ossie Clark camps it up. Mo and Mike look ridiculous making wooden trees. Celia is frivolous and stupid and far from a muse. Patrick Procktor, the watercolourist and long-term friend of Hockney since art college days, tells a funny one-liner about his Venetian paintings and strikes a camp pose. Kasmin, the gallery owner who has sole rights to exhibit Hockney in the UK, continually regrets his lack of Hockney's paintings to sell and has his face squashed against a window pane. Hockney himself tells amusing stories. Perhaps this is a world that doesn't take itself too seriously after all. Hockney's relationship problems should not be assumed to be terminal.

136 Nearly 600 people responded to newspaper adverts in the Oslo and Åsgårdstrand press (Watkins, 2005: 51).

providing ideas and dialogue and a say in how their character was to be shown and developed. Watkins himself describes what he sees as three levels of interaction as “pure recreation”, “mixed recreation” and “feelings of the actors” (Gomez, 2007: 23). This meant the characters became a distillation that combine an interpretation of the historical personage with the insights of a modern observer.¹³⁷ Watkins had such faith in his actors and felt he knew them so well that he was unconcerned that he did not know, for example, what exactly the four women from the *Kristiania Bohème* said in interview about their relationships and marriage until translation was undertaken at the editing stage (Gianvito, n.d.: 5).¹³⁸ As with Jack Hazan, Watkins is at great pains to insist, “I never make any attempt to make somebody, somebody else. I think out scenes with people” (quoted in Gomez, 2007: 23). Watkins is also aware that his insistence on using only amateurs can be taken as merely replacing one cinematic convention with another, but justifies it by his conclusion that the effect of using amateurs is a major element in preventing audience passivity, and his filmmaking is all about involving the audience (Gomez, 2007: 25). Watkins has described the end result as “living history” using the example of Munch and Mrs Heiberg meeting in a cabin in Asgårdstrand in summer 1889, where he accuses her of having another lover. The dialogue uses entries from Munch’s diaries, suggestions from Watkins, and elements suggested by the two actors using elements from their own lives that they felt added depth and explanation to the situation (Gianvito, n.d.: 5).

Ken Russell in *Savage Messiah* was using professional actors. He could not afford ‘big names’, and lost Jeanne Moreau (Phillips, 1979: 116), but went for a professional cast largely previously unknown on screen that could suggest at one moment the sheer physicality of creating a work of art and then in the next scene being convincing in the most tender of love scenes. This involved making believable the intense and long-lasting relationship between Henry and Sophie Gaudier-Brzeska both within the large disparity in

137 Watkins acknowledges that the film was “written in collaboration with the cast, many of whom express their opinions” within the credits (cited in Hobbs, 2007: 1). The working with cast experiences becomes more important with each of Watkins films. In the earlier films the characters can be little developed, merely representing people in a given situation, but by *Edvard Munch* they have in addition become unique individuals (Gomez, 1979: 42-43).

138 Another example of how Watkins considers that ‘chance’ in filmmaking is a liberating tool rather than something to be feared and all stages of production be tightly controlled.

their ages and in the ambiguity as to the sexual nature of the relationship. Scott Anthony was chosen to play Henri Gaudier when fresh out of RADA because Russell believed he looked like someone “who could actually pick up a hammer and chisel and reduce a six-foot piece of marble to the size of a pea...and in his screen tests I made him get hold of a hammer and chisel and smooth smash something. I had to believe that he could produce the work that Gaudier produced, and he did make me believe it” (quoted in Phillips, 1979: 113). In this depiction Russell was putting his ideas on the sheer physicality of creating art over historical veracity, as Ede’s portrait of Gaudier, suggests a gaunt, thin and delicate man with sunken cheeks and eyes. The extracts from the letters tell of Gaudier frequently catching colds and headaches and having nosebleeds, while being neurotic and prone to bouts of anger, tears and depression (Lanza, 2007: 137). Anthony, in contrast, looks like an athletic public schoolboy rather than the slightly built Latin features gazing out from photographs of the real artist.

The relative difficulty of obtaining prints of the three films has in the past made the films themselves appear both desirable and radical. Russell’s *Savage Messiah* lasted only one week in a West-End cinema on its first British release, appeared on video, but was not available on DVD until 2011, and then only on-demand in the USA in Region 1 format. The rental copy from the BFI is in appalling condition, largely desaturated of colour. While Hazan’s *A Bigger Splash* premiered in the Critics Week at the Cannes Film Festival, giving it much publicity and very favourable reviews in the French Press, it also gained an immediate notoriety because of its explicit depiction of Hockney’s queer milieu. Originally chosen to be the opening film for the 1974 London Film Festival, the Director of the BFI, Keith Lucas, overturned the decision, saying it was likely to be offensive for the array of invited London mayors to sit through.¹³⁹ The British Board of Film Censors took several months to pass the film for exhibition, with some small cuts, only after a press campaign. Distributors were wary of being involved with such a controversial production (Richmond, 1975: 7 and Ryman, 1975: 14), although once open it broke box-office records at three London cinemas for three weeks and then played continuously at the Times

139 *Akenfeld* (Peter Hall, 1974) became the Festival opener by default (*Ripples*, 1974: 5). At first Hazan said he would withdraw his film, but he relented and it was given the consolation prize of closing the Festival instead (Richmond, 1975: 7).

Centre in Baker Street, a small art house cinema in London, for eighteen months (Hazan, 2006).¹⁴⁰ It was also considered “disgusting and immoral” by the United States Customs and Excise and originally only given a permit for a single showing at the New York Film Festival (cited in Webb, 1988: 144), though full houses led to its showings being increased. Even in France it had to await four months for a certificate so it could be shown in Paris alongside the David Hockney retrospective exhibition at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Ryman, 1975: 14). Today it is most readily categorised in online DVD sources as a material of “gay interest” rather than a biopic or source of art history. For *Edvard Munch* the hostility to it came from the higher echelons within NRK, its co-producer, as there was a dislike of the image of Munch which it presented.¹⁴¹

The way the works of art are reproduced in the three films is very different and reflects the philosophies behind them. Where *Savage Messiah* makes Gaudier-Brzeska’s work a cause for celebration, in *Edvard Munch* the act of artistic creation is an act of pain and discomfort both mental and physical. In *A Bigger Splash*, Hockney’s paintings are viewed from two angles with the documentary style recording of the artist working in his studio contrasting with the often surreal juxtaposition of his paintings with images of the live sitters, particularly in the display of several double portraits, Here, often, living tableaux recreate the original compositions, while at the same time this very act of recreation provides a commentary on them.

To begin with *A Bigger Splash*, where the film does score is in providing a photographic record of Hockney’s techniques while producing a major painting, *Portrait of an Artist*, within two weeks. After an abortive filming trip to France, Hockney felt so guilty towards Hazan that Hazan was able to re-negotiate rights of access to the painter. It

140 Hazan placed distribution in the hands of Mike Caplan who had publicised Kubrick’s *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and *2001* (1968), who decided to go for a relatively large-scale opening (Hazan, 2006).

141 For example, the film was removed from both the screenings and the catalogue at the annual Nordic Screenings in Stockholm, which was the annual sales meeting for European TV sales. Also the copy sent for consideration by the Cannes Film Festival was delayed, so it missed the chance of representing Norway at the Festival. Then the making of 35mm prints for theatrical cinema release was not approved and Watkins had to fight hard to get any run off at all. In effect from 1980 to 1990 the film was unavailable from NRK, except for a few outings on poor quality video (Gomez, 2007: 41). In fact, by 2002, of Watkins output, only *Culloden*, *The War Game*, and *Edvard Munch* had a North American distributor (MacDonald, 2002: 360).

was agreed that filming could take place every couple of days, so that the whole process is unfolded as it took place. Hazan was also able to borrow some powerful lamps, which allowed Hockney to work through the night for fifteen hours at a stretch. The resulting film captures particularly, the close working relationship with his assistant Mo McDermott; and more specifically how a life-size cut-out of Peter was made up, around which the rest of the painting could be structured. While earlier scenes of the studio tend to feel traditional and like still-lives, as the camera pans around the paintings on easels and the pots of paints, these later sequences, where Hockney is working under a time constraint, come across as dynamic and vibrant, with the feel of a pent-up energy. The effect is one of careful contrast to the coolness and studied colour combinations of the other studio scenes. The use of music makes a significant difference here, as the quiet soundless views of the studio of the first half of the film develop into a full blown operatic aria accompanying the slashing of the first attempt at *Portrait of an Artist*. The reason given by Hazan's narrative suggests that Hockney was unhappy with the picture because it so powerfully invoked remembrances of his times with Peter, who by this time was living in his own small studio rather than at Powis Street. Hockney is falsely endowed with 'artist's block' and he cannot continue painting. He becomes so depressed that he takes out his anger with Peter by cutting up the first version of the painting. This forms a highly dramatic and unexpected moment in the film.

In actual fact it was not this canvas that was ripped for the film. The first version still sits on an easel in the background if one looks at the sequence in slow motion. The first version was never destroyed in a fit of pique. It was carefully trimmed and the best part of it, a plant growing at the edge of the swimming pool, given to Ossie and Celia as a gift (Stangos, 1976:247). Hockney's problems with it were purely technical and without emotional bias.¹⁴² Hockney did not sit back and stare into space when Peter left, rather,

142 Hockney has described how "In the first version, I painted the underwater figure first, as I wanted it in thin acrylic washes to emphasise the wetness. Then I coated the rest of the canvas with gesso. This meant that I couldn't alter the position of the pool and the figure, and I immediately got into difficulties with the rest of the painting. The figures never related to one another, or to the background. I changed the setting constantly from distant mountains to a claustrophobic wall and back again to mountains. I even tried a glass wall...I kept fiddling with it and leaving it and working on other things, then going back to it. I worked on it for quite a long time....Eventually, after about four months, it dawned on me what was wrong: it was the angle of the pool, which was causing me all the problems. I couldn't alter the water section and it

the exact opposite occurred. He propelled himself into endless work, without leisure time. The split with Peter resulted in the most productive period of his work to date, most of which were to be recognised as major canvases.¹⁴³ Within the film's opening collage of Hockney press cuttings one large headline stands out with the camera also lingering on it. It says, "THE ARTIST – I cling to work when I'm unhappy."

The layering of realities within the film sets up a very complicated series of reactions between the film and its audience. To start with there are real people depicted in real events. At other moments these same real people are engaged in staged events. There is deliberately no clear distinction between the two, as even the so-called *cinéma vérité* moments of hand-held camera action have some element of manipulation. Hazan defended this mixture on the basis that "the fact that fact and fiction are interwoven shouldn't really deter at all. The idea is that you should get one impression. You shouldn't bother with what's real and what's not real. The only thing that matters is that it's emotionally correct. And I think it is" (cited in Ryman, 1975: 14). Certainly the staged material is well integrated and the same attitude towards the audience prevails in both types of material. The film makes no concession to the audience in terms of how they enter this special world. The characters are not properly introduced as in a straightforward narrative film. Nor are their relationships made explicit. Information has to be derived from scraps of conversations thrown in.

Many of the real people are also shown as reproductions within portrait paintings of them by Hockney. The audience is given the chance of viewing them as Hockney saw them as well as Hazan sees them, and can make comparisons between the two representations. This point is made even clearer as many of the real people are then

was impossible to adjust it, so I decided to repaint the picture completely, in time to send it to the Andrée Emmerich Gallery for my show in May" (cited in Stangos, 1976: 247).

143 Hockney: "The truth is, I was so unhappy, there was nothing to do but work. That was when I started staying in. I didn't go out much; I just worked. *Sur la terrasse* was just about finished. *Pool and Steps*, *Le Nid du Duc* I think was half-finished. *Still Life on a Glass Table* I began in September; the *French Shop* was painted after September, and so were the *Beach Umbrella* and *Rubber Ring Floating in a Swimming Pool*; and I began the *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)*, *The Island*, and *Deep and Wet Water* – all from September on. Whereas with Peter I often went out in the evening, from then on I didn't. For about three months I was painting fourteen, fifteen hours a day. There was nothing else I wanted to do. It was a way of coping with life. It was very lonely; I was incredibly lonely" (cited in Stangos, 1976: 240).

shown directly standing alongside their portraits. When Ossie Clark stands alongside *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy* at the Tate Gallery, it is a joyous moment, made even more magical when there is a dissolve into Ossie, for a few seconds, also holding the cat. In other tableaux this joy and playfulness is often replaced by a disturbing feeling, of subdued but imminent violence, particularly in that of *Henry Geldzahler and Christopher Scott*. This is staged while Hockney is having his alleged breakdown in New York. Hockney enters Geldzahler's flat and opens a door to find him sitting on the same sofa and in the same position as in the portrait. He stares coldly at Hockney for some time. Hockney is clearly made uncomfortable and to feel an outsider and leaves, rejected and adding to his depression. The camera remains fixed on the scene and Geldzahler and Scott remain mute and motionless. The viewer is unnerved as well because the point of view of the shots is unclear. Is this Hockney watching, or what Geldzahler thinks is happening or what Hazan's interpreting? (French, 1975: 120).¹⁴⁴

The tableaux also provide a commentary on the paintings as the paintings were originally inspired by a series of photographs as much as the subject sitting for the artist. The paintings quite radically alter the feel of the original photographic images, as both objects and architecture are displaced to obtain a differently balanced portrait. The objects and viewpoint remaining in the finished paintings are important to Hockney's conveying the personality of the sitter. Here, the recreated tableaux are near to the final painting but also suggest some of the features removed from the original untouched photographs.

In *Edvard Munch* the use of Munch's paintings can be equally unsettling but they are used in a very different way. Works up to 1908, when Munch suffered a breakdown while on the edge of his breakthrough and recognition by the art world, are shown and

144 For those in Paris when the film opened a further unique experience was available. The opening coincided with a Hockney retrospective exhibition at the Musée Des Arts Décoratifs, Palais du Louvre (Ryman, 1975: 14). As Hockney himself explains: "That's one reason why a lot of people said they loved it; they would go to the film, then go to the exhibition and see the real paintings. People say it was a marvelous experience to watch the film and then be able to go and see the real paintings, especially for people who had never come across my work before" (cited in Stangos, 1976: 287). Partly as a result of this coincidence of film and exhibition, the media attention in Paris eventually became too obtrusive and Hockney returned to live in London in 1975 (Geldzahler, 1976: 22).

they are closely related to his psychological condition. Watkins deliberately limits the number of paintings shown but repeats a series of key works several times, just as in the same way he shows recurrent memories that are ever-present and near the surface in Munch's consciousness. The paintings become a second leitmotif that becomes familiar to the viewer and supports a triggering of reactions to Munch's moods and preoccupations (Welsh, 1977: 87).¹⁴⁵ In the very long film Watkins shows between thirty and forty canvases (Gomez, 2007: 19). Watkins goes out of his way to avoid a traditional presentation of the paintings. There are hardly any panning shots over an entire canvas, rather the camera closes-up on very specific details that reinforce his theme at the time. *The Sick Child* (1894) is probably the single most important painting to Watkins as it was produced in the two most intense years of Munch's affair with Mrs Heiberg. Munch himself considered "*The Sick Child* opened a new road in my art. Most of my later work owes its origin to this very picture" (quoted in Timm, 1969: 29-30).

The end result is that many commentators emphasise that Watkins succeeds in one area of the artist biopic where most fail, in conveying the authenticity of the creative act and that the characters on the screen actually seem to be involved in the act of painting. Gomez (2007: 18) attributes this to several factors. Watkins filmed in actual locations whenever possible, even in the room where Munch's mother died. He also used many copies of Munch's works at various stages of completion, so the final work is carefully built-up in very small increments. The painter's techniques are shown in extreme close-up, especially in the creation of his woodcuts and lithographs in the long version of the film, where a long take shows Munch's hands working a lithographic stone, first inking it, then cleaning the ink from it and effacing a self-portrait, then re-inking it (Nolley, 1987: 112). At another point, when we see a close-up of the heavily scored, scratched and over-painted surface of *The Sick Child*, the magnified sound on one track of the soundtrack of the scratching, recorded from the back of the canvas, gives an aural interpretation of the bleeding and scoring of the paint (Hobbs, 2007:2). Watkins has so immersed himself in the work of Munch that the whole film is saturated with visuals that refer back to

145 The core set are *The Sick Child* (1885-86), *Sister Ina in Black* (1884), *Madonna* (1893), *Evening/Yellow Boat* (1891-93), *Vampire* (1893), *The Shriek/The Scream* (1893) and a series of self-portraits culminating in *Self-Portrait with Skeleton Arm* (1895).

Munch's paintings as well as showing the works themselves. This quotation goes beyond simple reproduction of the paintings to the use of a similar ambience and use of space. For example, both the space and the emotions of *Jealousy* (1895) are evoked in one of the beer-hall sequences where Munch sits in the left foreground and Mrs Heiberg and her husband are in the background. Watkins uses similar set-ups echoing other paintings and lithographs not seen in the film, such as *The Dead Mother and Child* (1897-99) or *Tingel-Tangel*. In fact the technique is not even limited to works by Munch, as the entire sequence showing the inspection of Line Pedersen for venereal disease is modelled on Christian Krohg's painting *Albertine at the Police Doctor's Waiting Room* (1885-87).

Watkins was anxious to bathe the whole film in the same light and colour found in Munch's paintings, so the complete viewing experience was one of entering the world of Munch's works. Watkins saw this as needing to replicate Munch's "nervous dissolving treatment of colour" (quoted in Gomez, 2007: 38) and sought the 'right' light effect by experimenting with the grain of the film and the use of filters and indirect lighting. The problem was solved by accident, as the required atmosphere and mood was achieved by bathing the scenes in Munch's trademark insubstantial blue. This occurred when indoor film was mistakenly marked as daylight and was used outside without a corrective filter, resulting in a strong bluish light. (Gomez, 2007: 38). This gave Watkins film a desired look very far from Hollywood gloss and akin to that in nineteenth century Oslo interiors (Watkins, 2005: 48). The film moves away from this effect in only a few scenes, where Watkins feels another ambience is suitable. For example, the 'love scenes' between Mrs Heiberg and Munch take place against a background of a crimson-russet sun setting into the sea, which Welsh (1977: 78) rightly points out "do not exist elsewhere in the cinema of Peter Watkins".

Savage Messiah opens with Henri Gaudier sketching a hand alongside the credits. His drawing ability is referred to several times as he is always sketching, but what really attracts Russell (quoted in Lanza, 2007: 140) is Gaudier's sculpture. He said, "if you really want to show the hard work behind a work of art, then a sculptor is your very best subject". This comes across most forcibly in the often quoted scene when Gaudier sculpts a male torso overnight, working on a stolen headstone. Kathleen Carroll (quoted in

Filmfacts, 1972: 579) says, "*Savage Messiah* has a savage energy, a lusty, boisterous quality that matches the robust style of Gaudier's work". Russell achieves this by laying down a rhythmic ticking of the chisel over Gaudier's non-stop philosophising, while the camera constantly sweeps over the display at an angle of 180 degrees, slowly up then down. The subtle lighting helps the audience see the shape of the form emerging from the stone, suggesting its very texture.¹⁴⁶ The manic and child-like energy of Gaudier, so well documented in both Ede and Brodzky's written accounts, contrasts with the sleepy countenances of Sophie and Porky, both forcing themselves to stay awake (Gomez, 1976: 170).¹⁴⁷ In doing this, Russell is also demystifying the creative act, trying to bring its understanding nearer to the ordinary public. The first draft of the film's script described how Gaudier "is fast, clean, in total control. There is nothing mysterious, mystical, about what he is doing. This is where GAUDIÉ is *least* romantic, *least* the 'Bohemian', *least* different to other people" (cited in Dempsey, 1973/74: 12 and Logue, 1972: 24. Emphases in the original).

Having achieved this, Russell leaves the display of Gaudier's sculpture until the end of the film. In a coda similar to that of Tarkovsky in *Andrei Rublev*, the screen is filled after his death with a ravishing display of all his major works. These are based on the collection in the Edinburgh Museum. They are displayed as if in a museum, as the first draft of the script had them shown while Gaudier was still alive, together with his comments on what the public said about them. The shooting script retained the public and their comments, but the finished scene removes nearly all the public and simply plays to Debussy's *Three Nocturnes* on the soundtrack (Dempsey, 1973/74: 16). The works

146 The screenplay for this sequence has been published: see Logue (1972: 28-29).

147 However, Russell's work, if it does nothing else, provokes a strong reaction. To be fair there are probably more critics in the 'anti' corner than in the 'pro'. It is difficult to get behind many of the bitter attacks aimed at Russell's work, much of which his biographers have shown to be not simply inaccurate but often fabricated (e.g. Dempsey, 1973/74: 9). His foremost critic was the *New Yorker's* Pauline Kael, who dismissed *Savage Messiah* on the grounds that all of "Ken Russell's visions of artist's lives are camp fantasies derived from Hollywood's wildest kitsch" (Filmfacts, 1972: 580). One of her most biting, but fairly typical, comments was "What is the sum total of [Russell's] vision, but a sham superiority to simple human needs, a camp put-down of everything?...One can't just dismiss Russell's movies, because they have an influence. They cheapen everything they touch – not consciously, I think, but instinctively (quoted in Gomez, 1976: 15). She also claimed, "at a certain point in a Ken Russell movie, I always say to myself 'The man is mad'" (quoted in Lanza, 2007: 5). It is probably the rapid change in tone, from delicate to vulgar and brash, that nonplusses the critics. Robert Hughes (1972: 31) of *Time* saw *Savage Messiah* as an "erratic mediation between Vasari and Groucho Marx".

visibly moves one woman and this adds a sense of pathos. The exhibits are well lit and often revolve so both their form and texture can be appreciated.¹⁴⁸ While a great sense of loss in the unfulfilled potential of Gaudier is conveyed by a cut to the hardly chiselled block of stone in Gaudier's studio with Sophie standing forlornly next to it, the final atmosphere is one of hope and joy inspired by the sculptures as the crowd outside the window celebrate. Some critics, such as Lanza (2007: 140), have suggested Russell's climax might be deliberately ironic, in that Gaudier's works have ended up in the type of museum, as Gaudier expressed it at the start of the film, "pure and air-conditioned for the American tourists", but the compassionate and enthusiastic tone overall, plus the last minute cutting of derogatory comments from the final exhibition display, puts Russell's admiration on a sincere level. He just wants to display the works to their very best advantage by using proper exhibition cases.

All three films under discussion have had an important impact on the perception of just what an artist biopic comprises. Russell began the process, when as Zimmerman says in reviewing *Savage Messiah* in *Time* (quoted in Savage, 1972: 580), he "transformed the traditional film biography of great artistic personages – those stiff, ignorantly reverent and sorry lectures in cultural history – into passionate statements of personal belief in the primacy of art itself". The loss of the clichés of the biopic genre is replaced by a loosening of conventional narrative enabling him to blend past, present and fantasy, and explore the character and personality of his subjects, and not simply the historical facts of their lives. Russell himself felt in 1974 that *Savage Messiah* was his least effective film because it was too talkative (cited in Gomez, 1976: 179) and it was certainly comparatively restrained. However, in 2010 the Edinburgh Film Festival relaunched it as a lost masterpiece within their *After the Wave* retrospective season of sixteen lost and forgotten films made between 1967-1979 (Carrell, 2010: 1). Building on Russell's liberalisation, Watkins was able to add a greater depth of psychological insight as well as

148 This sequence is in keeping with Ede's (1984: 202) credo that "his [Gaudier-Brzeska's] sculpture needs quiet and thought, to reach its inward stillness." Hanke (1984: 216) suggests that Russell's pans over the sculptures are equivalent to the camera caressing them. The works shown are more extensive than those in the Memorial Exhibition of 1918, and include *Portrait of Horace Brodsky*, *Wrestlers*, *Workman Fallen from a Scaffold*, *Crouching Fawn*, *Bird Swallowing a Fish*, and *Birds Erect*.

exploiting his technical innovations and working methods to a logical point where he felt he could refine his montage editing no further. Hazan was as obsessive as Watkins in pursuing his blend of the fictional and the actual. Both Watkins and Hazan spent months editing their film-stock into new and highly complex interrelationships. At the film's Cannes premiere in 1974 David Robinson (1974: 37), *The Times* film critic, considered that Hazan's film "defies comparison with any other art film or study in documentary biography...*A Bigger Splash* is a unique document and an astonishing first feature".¹⁴⁹ The directors' close relationship to their subjects is conveyed very strongly and brings out a very different attitude towards the creation of art. Whereas Watkins emphasises the grief, pain, and solemnity, Hazan reflects an everyday mixture of the comic and sad. Russell, however, conveys fun and entertainment and a pure joy in filmmaking, epitomised in Henri Gaudier's words to Sophie, that "Art is alive. Enjoy it. Laugh at it. Love it or hate it, but don't worship it. You're not in church" (Quoted in Hanke, 1984: 9).

2.6. Across national boundaries: the rise and rise of the international artist bio-pic

The combination of an increasing hold of Hollywood productions on home box-offices together with a general decline in cinema attendance led to a search, at least in Europe, for new ways of supporting national cinema industries, particularly from the late seventies onwards. Salvation was seen in the increasing use of co-productions and co-financing arrangements between countries, so spreading costs. There was also a new symbiosis between television and film production, whereby television ceased to be the deadly rival and more the saviour of small budget films. These changes were also accompanied by the growing importance of an international film festival circuit for showcasing art house productions. These important changes in methods of production and distribution will be examined in this section as a background to the changes in representation found in the artist biopic into the twenty-first century, aspects of which will be analysed in the chapters that follow.

¹⁴⁹ Upon further reflection, when reviewing its London opening a year later, Robinson (1975: 9) still considered it "an exercise in impressionist portrait-biography not quite like anything else in cinema...As a portrait of an artist in his relationships with people, work and himself it is a unique document. As a study of a disintegrating love... it has rare delicacy, understatement, and acceptance. As a first feature film it is an astonishing feat".

The Guardian newspaper reported on August 7th 2000 that Hollywood films sliced off 70% of box-office takings in the UK but British films only had one percent of the American market (cited in Wayne, 2002: 2).¹⁵⁰ In 1988 some 80% of films produced in Europe failed to leave their country of origin (Wayne, 2002: 12), while in the UK in 1993 over half of the sixty-seven feature films made had still not been publicly released after one year, a situation not untypical of the rest of Europe (Brooks, 1998: 23). Production costs were also rising sharply and quickly. For example, in France they rose by 17 percent in 1978 and a further 35 percent in 1988 (Lanzoni, 2002: 307), while in Italy Carmine Cianfarini has estimated that the cost of a 'good' film had increased from 350 million lire in 1979 to 1.5 billion lire in 1984 (cited in Wood, 2005: 24). To protect home cinema industries various kinds of subsidies were tried. The most common were those legally enforced under international law encouraging co-productions between countries. Under these, films were co-produced between at least two countries. The two countries to make the most use of such schemes were France and Italy, with 1500 co-productions being made under a Franco-Italian Agreement between 1949 and 1995 (Jaeckel, 1996: 87).¹⁵¹ Generally the country putting in the most money had the most influence over production decisions, although the minority holder often negotiated rights in key areas. In co-financing the majority holder was in sole charge, with the lesser investors merely providing the finance. In France the number of films made under such arrangements were equal to the number of one hundred percent wholly French financed films between 1987 and 1993, averaging around 70 per year (Jaeckel, 1996: 85). In the mid-80s Porter (1985: 2) could suggest "Everywhere that you look in Europe, producers are trying to set up co-production deals."¹⁵²

150 Looked at in another way, in 1990 N. Roddick reported in *The Listener* that of 350 million people in eleven European countries, 96 million had watched an American film and 36% of cinemagoers had viewed European films (although nine percent of these were entirely American financed). In other words, four times as many people had watched an American film as against a European film (cited in Wood, 2005: 29).

151 In 1995 France had co-production agreements with nearly forty countries. They worked well when the countries involved had cultural affinities and were based on similar industrial and institutional frameworks. Unfortunately growing divergences from the 1980s placed such arrangements under stress (Jaeckel, 1996: 87).

152 Another of his comments remains as true some twenty-five years later, in that "Today the production credits for some films look more like a guide to the stock market than the makers of a cultural artefact" (Porter, 1985: 1).

There were artistic dangers inherent in such cross-border investment as well as market risk. Commentators could be brutally frank about the risks of 'europuddings'.¹⁵³ The inevitability of compromises could result in underwritten stories, a cacophony of accents and languages, and an echo chamber of post-filming dubbing. Quentin Falk, writing in *Screen International* in 1981, was of the opinion that the films with a British input had merely been "a series of uneasy hybrids often bastardised beyond recognition to fulfill the conditions necessary to bring home the bacon. And the truth is that, in the main, the bacon has resolutely remained on the counter" (cited in Porter, 1985: 4). Such productions, whether large or small, exhibited problems of controlling a multi-national cast and crew and potential conflicts among the many producers.¹⁵⁴ For example, *Modigliani* (Davis, 2004) exhibits many of these faults.

The film is a co-production between the USA, France, Germany, Italy, Romania and the UK based on the following production companies: Lucky 7 Productions LLC, Media Pro Pictures, Alicéléo, Bauer Martinez Studios, Buskin Film, CineSon Entertainment, Frame Werk Production GmbH & Co. KG, France 3 Cinéma, Istituto Luce, The Tower Limited Liability Partnership, and UKFS. It has an American star in Andy Garcia playing the title role, surrounded by a mixed English and French cast displaying a range of accents from the Estuary English of Omid Djalili as arch enemy Picasso to a cod-French accent by Peter Capaldi as an effete Jean Cocteau. The worst offender is the female lead, Elsa Zylberstein, who while looking the perfect likeness of Modigliani's muse Jeanne Hébuterne, speaks in a monotone with an American accent and very muffled as if recorded separately in an echo chamber. Davis generally directs in a style reminiscent of the excesses of traditional Hollywood melodrama, but inserts two completely different mood sections close to the style of pop music videos, which make a disjointed narrative even more flaccid. Modigliani and Jeanne wander along the Paris streets at night accompanied by Edith Piaf singing *La vie en rose* (in fact not written until twenty years after Modigliani's death), and

153 For example, the acceptance of and appropriateness of the term is endorsed by the Turkish film critic Ahmet Gürata (n.d., p.1) when discussing Turkish-European co-productions. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* the term was first used by Jeremy Isaacs in 1985, in relation to development of joint series by several European television networks.

154 In one of the most complicated cases, the director Vincent Ward produced as well as directed *The Map of the Human Heart* (1993), using his own money derived from the success of *Alien 3*, but also had to juggle thirty-five separate financial deals to raise the total capital he required (Jaeckel, 1996: 91).

dancing almost as if in a number from a Gene Kelly musical. The second sequence is one of the few sections actually showing a painter at work and also involves music, with a French rap number accompanying a montage of all the artists included in the film working on their chosen work for submission to the Salon des Artistes. Here the effect becomes comic as the timing of brush strokes occurs in rhythm to the Latin music. The two sequences seem aimed at a different market to the main film and appear ready mounted for exploitation as separate promotional material, but completely unbalance the narrative drive of the film as a whole.

The formation of the European Union has encouraged the development of a European wide approach to aiding the film industry. In particular, the various MEDIA programmes, which began in 1990, have given generous support beyond mere film production. For example, the 2007 programme, which runs until 2014, provides €755 million to 31 countries, with sixty-five percent of this fund earmarked for policies encouraging the wider distribution of European films, not only in Europe, but also worldwide (Blaney, 2007: 317). At the same time, since 1988, the Eurimages fund, with 34 members, administered by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, spends about ninety percent of its resources on supporting co-productions,¹⁵⁵ although the average subsidy given is no more than ten percent of a film's costs (Wayne, 2002: 13). Both initiatives provide a strong cultural objective as well as an economic support. For the MEDIA Programme the intention is "a stronger European audiovisual sector, reflecting Europe's cultural identity and heritage", while for Eurimages it is "endeavouring to support works which reflect the multiple facets of a European society whose common roots are evidence of a single culture" (cited in Blaney, 2007: 318, 321). Wayne (2002: 15) notes that "co-

155 This includes support for co-productions beyond the borders of the European Community, to such a degree that by 2004 the entire film output of several countries were dependent on co-production partners in core EU countries. These producers included Kazakhstan, Mozambique, Mali, Lebanon, Tunisia and Algeria, which led to suggestions that EU policies were simply perpetuating a new form of Orientalism by the back door (Halle, 2010: 304). The UK only subscribed to Eurimages between 1992-1996, when the Tory government re-examined British film policy and decided to reduce the system of subsidies as not economically effective, though *Sight and Sound*, the monthly organ of the British Film Institute, reported in February 1996 (Volume 6, Number 2, p.5) that the UK had paid in £5.5 million (the annual subscription being based on the country's GDP), but received £12.5 million in UK co-production finance, which in turn had generated £40 million of filmmaking activity. Macnab (2010: 1) has reported the strong film industry support for a reconsideration of British membership, especially in the wake of the demise of the UK Film Council.

productions are culturally contentious as well as logistically difficult” and cites European film scholar Wendy Everett on “the inevitable watering down of differences and resulting blandness of these films”. Falk considers this emphasis has skewered the way Europe is depicted in feature films. The “emphasis on a common European heritage of history and of high culture is being developed at the expense of an interrogation of what life is like in Europe today” (cited in Porter, 1985: 7). The European Community’s potential 300 million spectators are being forcibly moulded into a more coherent viewing public as preference is given to films that actively promote European transnationalism. Many commentators within national cinemas see this as a misuse of limited resources and consider the skills base it enables countries to build up, the financial gains from wider distribution, and the possibility of experimenting with developing a more universal European film language as a poor and uncertain return on the loss of more high quality local productions (Halle, 2010: 307). Among the artist biopics benefiting from Eurimage support have been *Volavérunt* (Spain/France, 1999), *Rembrandt* (France/Germany/Netherlands, 1999) and *Klimt* (Austria/France/Germany/UK, 2006). It is worth noting that all these projects had experienced directors, Bigas Luna in Spain, Charles Matton and Raoul Ruiz in France, who had already achieved critical success.

One unexpected source of funding for feature films in recent decades has been the growing involvement of television companies. Television was seen as the arch rival to the cinema in the 1950s and 1960s as cinema attendances continued to fall and spectators stayed at home to watch the small screen. The fall in attendances continued despite filmmakers fighting back with the added spectacle of full colour, big screens, and stereophonic sound. Among artist biopics, it has already been shown in Chapter 2.5 how Peter Watkins had obtained financing for *Edvard Munch* from the Scandinavian media in the mid-1970s, primarily for television transmission of the full five hour version. The financiers proved little interested in marketing Watkins’ shortened and completely re-edited version for theatrical release. In the 1980s, with the participation of, for example, Channel 4 and the BBC in the UK and Canal+ in France, television companies came to be the saviour of small budget independent films rather than their nemesis.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, by the

156 The situation in the UK is analysed in Chapter 4.

1990s French television was directly or indirectly providing forty-percent of the total financing for French films (Hayward, 1993: 61). Basically financing such projects was a cheap way of TV programming. For making a contribution towards the total costs of a project the TV channel obtained exclusive rights for early showings on television and bypassed the by now standard delays of one or two years in permission to transmit on television after any theatrical release. Giving the feature film even a limited commercial screen release gave it welcome publicity and reviews so potentially providing a ready made TV audience who already knew about it, rather than transmitting an unknown quantity to a more limited audience.

It must also be acknowledged that productions specially made for television have to some extent supplanted as well as supplemented the cinematic artist biopic. This is especially true of portraits of iconic national artists, where there can be a sense of obligation to cater to a ready made viewing base for a nationalistic sentiment allied to a colourful personal life: for example, *Goya* (Larraz, 1985), a six-part mini-series for TVE (Televisión Española). The same subject, however, had also attracted the West German, Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) in 1969, just as the theme of the series, an opposition to political oppression, was also pervasive in East Germany around the same date and embodied in Konrad Wolf's 1971 film as discussed in Chapter 2.4. Similar productions have also been produced as single works, such as Channel 4's *The Yellow House* (Durlacher, 2007) about the relations between Van Gogh and Gauguin when they shared house in Arles. *Georgia O'Keeffe* (Balaban, 2009) was shown on the Lifetime cable channel in the USA. It had high production values, starring Joan Allen and Jeremy Irons, and was nominated for numerous awards, but only gained one, from the Writer's Guild of America. While *television films* provide an aura of respectability for television companies and a higher cultural status, there lies the likelihood that such productions will be developed as televisual rather than cinematic presentations, with a different pace, narrative drive, sound and spectacle.

From a marketing perspective, the role of film festivals has become a dominant feature, of equal importance to the changes in film finance that have been discussed above. While it may be difficult to count the number of film festivals held in any particular

year with any exactitude, there is no denying the general upward trend in their number, especially since the 1980s. For example, the European Coordination of Film Festivals listed 76 in 1995 (when the organisation was founded), but the figure was up to 154 in twenty countries by 2000, while the *New York Times* estimated over a thousand worldwide by 2002 (Turan, 2002: 2).¹⁵⁷ This arises from the favourable combination of two basic sets of factors. Firstly, there is a continuously renewing set of local independent and foreign-language filmmakers who want an audience beyond their national boundaries. At the same time there is also a set of audiences in many countries who want and appreciate alternative films to those produced and distributed by Hollywood.

The authors of the major studies of the film festival circuit were themselves drawn from such circumstances. Turan (2002: 4) gained from his first attendance at the New York Film Festival in 1963 “a sense of a door opening into a world of culture and sophistication I had no idea existed, as well as hope that there might be a place there for me”, while De Valck (2007:13) had a craving for “other films” than those from Hollywood, which “was satisfied, above all, when we began visiting the international film festival in our hometown of Rotterdam”. At the same time, while small national distributors could not compete with the Hollywood marketing machinery, participation at a film festival was feasible and could both generate income and provide a promotional opportunity. Even those without a promotional budget might gain recognition by word of mouth and critical support. This situation has developed to the extent that Piers Handling, Director of the Toronto International Film Festival, can describe it as “an alternate distribution network” (cited in Turan, 2002:8). De Valck (2007:35) explains that, “By traveling the circuit, a film can accumulate value via the snowball effect. The more praise, prizes and buzz a film attracts, the more attention it is likely to receive at other festivals.” In this context it is easy to agree with the Oscar-winning producer Jeremy Thomas that “my relationships

157 The growing importance of the film festival circuit has gradually been recognised in the production of some academic analyses of the phenomenon in very recent years. What was once predominantly merely the regurgitation of publicists’ handouts to mark, say, a festival anniversary, has seen a transformation through the work of such research bodies as the Centre for Film Studies at St. Andrews University. Here their project on Dynamics of World Cinema has investigated the Transnational Channels of Global Film Distribution. So far this has resulted in the publication of five volumes of a *Film Festival Yearbook*. Number 1 was about *The Festival Circuit* (2009), Number 2 was on *Film Festivals and Imagined Communities* (2010), Number 3 on *Film Festivals and East Asia* (2011), Number 4 is on *Film Festivals and Activism* (2012), Number 5 on *Archival Film Festivals* (2013) and Number 6 is on *Film Festivals and the Middle East* (2014).

with heads of festivals are more important to me than heads of studios" (cited in Macnab, 2010:1).

This situation evolved slowly and De Valck (2007:19-20) distinguishes three historical phases in this process. At first, starting with Venice in 1932, and reaching into the early 1970s (just beyond the European upheavals of 1968), festivals were basically showcases for national cinemas. Competitive programmes with prizes could bring honour to winning films and filmmakers, adding cultural if not monetary value to the films, by suggesting they were 'the best' of national cinema.¹⁵⁸ Then, from the 1980s, many independently organised festivals were set up and they chose their own programme rather than inviting nations to send in festival entries. This enabled them to develop niche markets based on specialised and themed programme selections that differentiate each from the other.¹⁵⁹ For example, there is a direct correlation between the emergence of a Canadian national cinema and the founding of the Montreal World Film Festival in 1975 and the Toronto International Film Festival in 1976, the former having a Panorama Canada track and the latter including a Perspective Canada series since 1984 (Czach, 2004: 78-79). De Valck (2007:208) has summed up the basic dangers inherent in this situation as:

"The festivals depended on a constant supply of 'discoveries' – new trends, new authors, and fresh new waves – to keep the festival machines running. The festival system became more and more boxed-in, a safe zone that depended on standardised...input/output channels and it was closed off from the latest developments in the rest of the cultural industries. As time passed, the focus on independent talent, art cinema, and the avant-garde turned into an artificial and outdated dogma that provided the criteria for determining who would qualify for subsidies."

As Piers Handling said "A lot of work now only gets shown at festivals. A lot of foreign-language film that would get distribution ten years ago doesn't get seen anymore" (cited

158 With such competition comes a pecking order of festivals, and Cannes, with its Palme d'Or, is definitely at the top of any list as the most prestigious, see, for example, Czach (2004: 81).

159 The division between categories is quite fluid. For example, Cannes introduced its Directors' Fortnight (La Quinzaine de Réalisateurs) in 1969, following criticism of its organisation in 1968 when it was interrupted by a group of militant filmmakers. The Fortnight was to provide more experimental programming. The history of the Directors' Fortnight has been covered in a documentary by Olivier Jahan, *40 x 15* (2008) (Porton, 2009b: 6).

in Turan, 2002: 8). In the noughties there has been a global spread of film festivals in effect providing an international film festival circuit with highly professional organisers and based on a highly institutionalised set-up supporting a money-making operation.¹⁶⁰ This has included the introduction of professional sponsorship deals and an active search for partnerships with industry. This set-up has confirmed that 'art cinema' can be economically viable by remaining based on "the European discourse of art and auteurs, national cinema and new waves, and discoveries and canons" (De Valck, 2007: 209). The festivals can broadly be classified into three types: those with predominantly a business agenda, such as Cannes, Sundance or ShoWest; those with a geopolitical agenda, such as FESPACO (Festival Pan-africaine du Cinéma de Ouagadougou) at Burkino Faso, Havana, Sarajevo or the Midnight Sun; those with aesthetic or cultural agendas, such as Pordenone, Lone Pine or Telluride.

Let us take the example of *Séraphine* (Provost, 2008), based on the life of Séraphine de Senlis (1864-1934), the autistic French female artist who painted in a naïve style. The film opened in France on 7 October 2008 and was an immediate success, with 766, 902 admissions by 31 March 2009. To support it becoming an international success it went to the Toronto International Film Festival on 7 September 2008, the Gent International Film Festival on 10 October, the Französische Filmtage Tübingen on 11 November and the Cairo International Film Festival on 27 November. In Cairo, Yolande Moreau was awarded the Best Actress prize. This gave the film a good head-start at the European Film Market in February 2009 and provided the focus for subsequent media marketing in each region, where Moreau's total immersion in the lead role was given prominence alongside the novelty of such an unglamorous, and indeed handicapped personage, being given the role of a heroine. The North American market was prepared by showings at the Portland International Film Festival on 11 February 2009, the Newport Beach International Film Festival on 28 April, and the Seattle International Film Festival on 1 June. The film then had a limited release in the United States from the 5 June on six

¹⁶⁰ This section by the very nature of the artist bio-pic, gives emphasis to the Eurocentric and independent (non-Hollywood) aspects of the film festival circuit. The importance of the film festival to Hollywood films is, of course, also recognised. Hollywood fully exploits the glamour and glitter of festival premieres and uses their marketing opportunities to the full.

screens, taking \$38,637 on its opening weekend, and went on to take \$881,839 by the 7 March 2010. The European market was tested further by showings at the Festival du Film Francophone in Greece on 8 April 2009, the Edinburgh Film Festival on 23 June and the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival on 30 July.¹⁶¹ The South American market was catered for by showings at the Rio de Janeiro International Film Festival on 25 September 2009 and the Pantalla Pinamar Festival in Argentina on 11 March 2010.¹⁶² The chance of even wider release was secured after the film swept the board at the annual French César Awards in February 2009, winning in the categories for Best Actress, Best Cinematography, Best Costume Design, Best French Film, Best Music, Best Writing, Best Production Design, Best Sound, and Best Director. In 2009 it opened in Switzerland, Greece, the Netherlands, Spain, the USA, South Korea, Estonia, Sweden, Canada, the Czech Republic, New Zealand, Portugal, Brazil, Israel, Poland, Russia, Finland, the UK and Germany.¹⁶³

In bringing together the themes that have been under discussion concerning the financing of films in recent years - the rise of international production, the growth of trans-European co-operation, the backing of national television companies, and the importance of film festivals - it is important to discover to what extent such trends are encouraging a standardisation of approach. In the same way that producers must begin to tailor their proposed productions towards what they see as the taste of the film festival selectors or the selection committees of national film financing bodies, so for example, product coming out of Europe is likely to be accommodating to the growing range of gateways to the funds of European funding bodies. What will be explored in the next two chapters is to what extent, based on the above background analysis, the artist biopic has become either formulaic and/or supranational. Via an examination of British artist biopics it will be seen whether the contribution of such films to a British national cinema has been overshadowed by a move towards a more European-wide representation; while a study of film portrayals of one of Europe's most famous painters, Vincent Van Gogh, will

161 The film was not released in the UK until the 27 November 2009.

162 <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1048171/releaseinfo>. Accessed 16/11/2010.

163 <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1048171/awards> Accessed 16/11/2010).

be used to compare and contrast the approaches taken to their subject across national boundaries. Such investigations will be followed by a look at how changing attitudes have benefited a new approach to artist biopics, in particular, the recognition of the female artist, and a new permissiveness has encouraged the continued exploration of the artist as an 'outsider' into the realms of the queer artist.

As we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century there is, through new technology, the opportunity for the artist biopic once again to be opened up to filmmakers producing work nearer the experimental or avant-garde end of the spectrum. Cheap and portable equipment for HD video or DVD recording also provides sophisticated CGI features encouraging new ways of depicting an artist's work. At the same time, the opening up of new distribution channels via the internet overcomes the stranglehold of cinema circuits. For example, the 'zero-budget' *Eyes of Van Gogh* (Barnett, 2005) has in 2010 been included on Amazon's premium DVD-on-demand service for less-commercial films. Such provision also includes mainstream works that were not box-office successes, but are nevertheless interesting to niche audiences, such as Warner Bros' *The Picasso Summer* (Bourguignon, 1969).

Chapter 3. Vincent Van Gogh

3.1. Introduction

By 1993, there were already eighty-five films, of all types, including documentaries, made about Vincent Van Gogh. They originated from nineteen countries, commencing with Alain Resnais's *Van Gogh* in 1948, then three were produced in the 1950s, four in the 1960s, twenty in the 1970s, forty-two in the 1980s, and fifteen between 1990 and 1992. The latter were clustered around the centenary celebrations of Van Gogh's death. Such an output led Kōdera (1993a: 193) to declare, "In the second half of the twentieth century, films and videos about Van Gogh have played a bigger role in creating myths than novels, biographies or even the publication of the artist's letters." Part of the purpose of this chapter is to explore this statement and investigate the wide range of interpretations of the Van Gogh life that have been represented within artist biopics.

This rich vein of biography has resulted in, as Griselda Pollock (1980: 105) suggests, that "'Van Gogh' has become a paradigm of the 'modern artist'." The artist biopics about Vincent are simply one small part of what has become a global "Van Gogh 'industry'" (Kōdera, 1993b: 17)¹⁶⁴, comprising, among other things, cinema, television, novels, exhibitions, mass reproductions (ranging from posters to postcards and calendars), advertising and general commercialisation with items such as souvenirs and kitsch.¹⁶⁵ His very ubiquity can mask the changing nature of the public's perception of the artist over time. The initial shock of the rise in auction room prices for his work – for example, \$40 million for *Sunflowers* in 1986 or \$50 million for *Iris* in 1987 (Douglas, 1988: 265) - again rekindled interest in his life and work and contributed to another layer of mythology surrounding the artist. As we shall see, this too has been incorporated into the biopic, as a prologue to Altman's *Vincent and Theo*, where the sheer scale of the

164 The phrase was first used by John Walker in his *Van Gogh Studies* (1981), pp. 41-46.

165 "V[an] G[ogh] reproductions adorn school corridors and dentist's waiting rooms" (Pollock, 1980: 103) or "a copy of *Sunflowers* features in nearly every student dormitory across the United States" (Houseman, 1986: 337).

auction emphasises the theatricality and the art market itself becomes a kind of theatre (Zemel, 1988: 90).

The persistence of mythology as against historical fact within the artist biopic is shown in the continued linking of the painting *Wheatfield with Crows* with Van Gogh's suicide attempt in an Auvers wheatfield. *Lust for Life* shows Van Gogh painting this picture as he is attacked by a flock of crows and then shooting himself. Art historians have established that this was definitely not his last painting, but it remains in use in the artist biopic as such because it fulfils a prophetic role so neatly, tying in to the myth of the troubled artist. In *Vincent and Theo* the painting is present by Vincent's deathbed. In Kurosawa's *Dreams* (1990) it is the painting Van Gogh was at work on before he disappears out of sight over the hill, and out of the film, as a flock of crows whirl around the narrator, "I".¹⁶⁶

Such conformity in the film *Lust for Life* or *la vie romancée* of Irving Stone's novel of the same title smacks of the branding of Van Gogh, in an artistic as well as in a commercial sense. Zemel (1988: 88) believes that "Van Gogh serves as a perfect postmodern commodity." This is allied to a majority of biopics on Van Gogh either originating in North America or having an American director, which can in turn bring a very different tradition to bear on a production compared to a European view of the artist. There is also a preference for concentrating on Van Gogh's later years, particularly his last year of life, which places an emphasis on his illness and potential madness and this possibly being associated with a culmination of his creative genius.

Any research into the 'Van Gogh phenomenon' keeps returning to the basic question, here summarised by Hammacher (1970: 32), "Do people go in crowds to queue for the exhibitions out of love for the myth surrounding painting and sculpture, out of love of a style, or is it, where Van Gogh is concerned, a myth surrounding a personality?"

¹⁶⁶ Pollock (1980: 77, note 4) has drawn attention to a similar acceptance of such myth in the art historical world and a resistance to forgoing such convenient and apt shorthand. For example, the catalogue of the 1968 Van Gogh exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, stated: "This painting is not in fact Vincent's last work, though the force of the imagery makes it appropriate for this position."

Novotny (1953: 116) has pointed out, that for Van Gogh, this mythic status was achieved in a much shorter time than for other artists, well before biopics appeared on the scene, and I am in agreement with Zemel (1980: 2) that this occurred “not simply because of the intrinsic quality of his art but because both his art and his life stirred deeply felt artistic values and cultural needs”, tied into a deep emotionality. The first Van Gogh biopic, *Lust for Life*, has already been examined (Chapter 2.3) in terms of evolution of the genre and innovation of techniques, style, and narrative development. In this chapter I shall be returning to it to consider its iconic status and its role in establishing the mythology of the ‘artist genius’. Looking at the movies that followed after *Lust for Life* will show how those on Van Gogh have acted as a cultural barometer of their times. Filmmakers begin to see beyond the simple ‘mad genius’ category. Pollock (1993: 233) ties these changes in to wider changes in the nature of the art market. It becomes a more sensible economic argument for investment purposes to emphasise the hardworking ‘dedicated artist’ rather than the ‘mad genius’, especially as Japanese money sustains the large sums paid for Van Gogh’s paintings, where a Christian iconography and ethical stance has less meaning.

As the Van Gogh biopics begin to look beyond the confines of the ‘mad genius’ category, so the explanation for the artist’s drive is opened up to many, often contradictory, cultural constructs. His representation becomes so diverse, that as Atkinson (2006) says, Van Gogh “has become as much a bio-historical Rorschach blot as Joan of Arc.” His filmic image remains of contemporary relevance because of its adaptability to new situations and preoccupations. The range of the later Van Gogh biopics varies from an emphasis on the one hand to the family man, on the other to an artist with the aesthetics of a punk rocker. We are presented with both a man of the people and a lunatic. There is even a taste of a different culture owing to his popularity in Japan. What is retained, however, is a continuing pre-occupation with the psychobiographical reading of his life. All Van Gogh biopics give priority to the personal life rather than the works of art (Walker, 1990: 184).

3.2 Lust for Life (1956)

In reviewing the whole output of films on Van Gogh, Griselda Pollock (1993: 220) concluded that *Lust for Life* "is in many ways the mythic film about Van Gogh. It appears to rehearse the major components of the legend of the suffering genius and mad artist, and lodge them in the popular imagination through the powerful visual images it creates for the legendary story." It deserves a high status because it, more than any of the subsequent biopics, also "provides a more complex reflection on the meanings of the artist and of modern art itself."¹⁶⁷ The stereotypes had long been set in print but the medium of cinema provided a new screen upon which the myths could be served up to a huge potential audience and with great impact.¹⁶⁸ The film had a wide appeal and satisfied several markets as it bridged the gap between high and low culture. Minnelli's use of colour and dynamic camera movement reflected the modernist tendencies he had been brought up with during the 1920s and 1930s (Levy, 2009: 397). Naremore (1993: 13-18) also considers that Minnelli drew upon a large range of non-filmic sources and brought novelty, innovation and change to his films, essential to gaining a wide popular base with commercial appeal while still pursuing higher ambitions.

The origins of the film have already been outlined (see Chapter. 2.3). The film rights to Irving Stone's popular novel, held by MGM, were running out. The director, Vincente Minnelli, had a personal interest in directing such a movie as he felt it was close to a self-portrait (Harvey, 1989: 221) and he had some say in his schedule as the leading director at the time at the studio. Van Gogh reflected Minnelli's workaholic nature, where he got a real excitement from working in this milieu, together with a similar belief that this dedication to an art form should have priority over all other commitments (Levy, 2009: 270). This commitment to film as art was also a channel to express his neurotic tendencies, verging on hysteria, and inner demons away from the domestic sphere, and these tendencies were magnified particularly in his melodramas where a bias for excess and hysteria was built into the genre (Levy, 2009: 275). Also, a major star, Kirk Douglas,

167 Although *Lust for Life* was the first film about Van Gogh to reach the screen, some tentative steps towards production had taken place in Italy in the early 1950s. In 1951 director Cesare Zavattini sought possible locations, and in 1954 producer Giuseppe d'Amato began a collaboration with independent American producer Robert Goldstein (Pinxteren, 1993: 198).

168 With due acknowledgement to Cole Porter's song from *Silk Stockings* (1955), via "Glorious Technicolor and breathtaking CinemaScope and stereophonic sound."

who was a Van Gogh look-alike, was trying to get a film project on Van Gogh off the ground. Gertjan Zuilhof reminds us that while “a great and intriguing artist such as Vincent Van Gogh does not intrinsically make an interesting film; on the contrary, the subject demands better-than-average courage, intelligence and cinematic quality to arrive at an acceptable product; Van Gogh has a lesson to teach the cinema” (quoted in Pollock, 1993: 217).

What elevates *Lust for Life* above the mere repetition of well-known life events attributed to Van Gogh is the way that Minnelli has fully integrated these within his style of Hollywood melodrama (Pollock, 1993: 220 and Bukatman, 2009: 303). Many of the events, such as the ear-cutting episode, obviously lend themselves to such treatment, but even so Minnelli must be given full consideration for refining them and adapting their interpretation to the widescreen with colour. Each event, particularly in the first half, is triggered like a small explosion and in rapid succession, so building up a feeling of frenetic activity both personal and artistic, and a very troubled and unstable environment. The film takes the most melodramatic scenes very seriously and avoids any camp element in the strong emotionalism. There is deliberately no intrusion of the gay 1890s naughty nightlife of say Huston’s *Moulin Rouge* to distract from the intensity of Van Gogh’s sufferings (Naremore, 1993: 138-139). Van Gogh’s inner pain and suffering gains credence from the introduction of an element of Christ-like suggestion, subtly distributed throughout the film, primarily in images, such as Van Gogh draped around a tree in a ‘Christ on the Cross’ type pose immediately before shooting himself. It also intrudes generally via strong comparisons in life patterns between Jesus and Van Gogh as the latter becomes an evangelist in the Borinage, is rejected by the Church, cast out from his family (except for Theo), followed by a casting out of the artistic community (Pollock, 1993: 225). There is also an obvious debt to psychiatry, for example, shown in the frequent use of mirrors, often providing multiple reflections of Van Gogh himself. The ear-cutting scene is staged around a mirror inviting direct acknowledgement of Lacan’s ‘mirror stage’ (Pollock, 1993: 234-235). Minnelli himself had directed *The Cobweb* as recently as 1954, set in an expensive psychiatric clinic.

The realism of the location shooting is accompanied by an emphasis on the pure physicality entailed in the painting process, often found in the genre, for example in Russell's *Savage Messiah*, as well as in the other Van Gogh movies such as *Vincent and Theo*. The way the canvases are filmed, with a wandering camera movement and close-ups on particular brush strokes and colour patterns makes them look akin to the abstract expressionism of Jackson Pollock, who died in August 1956.¹⁶⁹ As the film progresses, its images develop significantly bringing closer together what Van Gogh is experiencing in his head and what is actually present in the physical world. This interpretation culminates with Van Gogh's arrival in Arles, when he throws open the shutters on his first morning, and glories in the blossom on the trees.

Where *Lust for Life* might be said to fail is in keeping up its narrative momentum to the end. The narrative climax to the film comes with Gauguin's visit to Arles at the Yellow House, a feeling heightened by the mesmerising acting of Anthony Quinn as Gauguin in an Oscar-winning role. The remainder of the film is anti-climatic, with Van Gogh in defeatist mode winding down to his dismal death. This change in emphasis in who becomes the leading character also affects the evaluation of Van Gogh's work and alters and provides a new layer of myth to the person. It is Gauguin who takes on the mantle of the truly modern painter. Van Gogh in his more straightforward representative work of this period appears both conservative and rural in contrast to Gauguin who represents a more abstract style and appears both urban and avant-garde, particularly in the surroundings of Arles. Van Gogh blends in with the provincial rural scene and even in the local café while the fair is taking place, in his poor clothes and with his striking red hair; despite his obvious distress he goes unnoticed.

For many years Minnelli's reputation within the pantheon of famous directors was very equivocal.¹⁷⁰ Certainly, in *Lust for Life*, he changed the nature of film biography in

169 "The thickness of the paint, the clashing colours, and the vertiginous brushstrokes fill the Cinema Scope frame, pushing out at the edges, threatening to overwhelm everything. Now the film has pushed figural painting into the realm of abstraction" (McElhaney, 2009: 314).

170 Was he just a studio hack best known for making musicals? Even the *Cahiers du Cinéma* group were uncertain whether to restrict him to the award of a competent *metteur-en-scène* rather than elevate him to an accepted true *auteur*. Levy (2009: x) thinks it was Minnelli's well-known inarticulateness that was largely the cause of his not receiving due praise. He didn't like to explain his work and seemed incapable of

general. The emphasis on the subject's demons as much as their achievements appealed to a wide audience then and is perhaps even more popular in current celebrity-obsessed culture now. The interest is in the private drama surrounding the subject rather than the public face, with the favouring of a confessional mode (Casper, 2006). This to some extent had a downside as the style became an excuse for 'the more sordid the better'. Minnelli began a move away from the great and famous as favoured subjects into a modern extended range including, among others, athletes, entertainers, the infamous, and the revolutionary. *Lust for Life* can be seen as the origins of an emphasis on media-created personalities.

3.3 Centenary of Van Gogh's death (1990): *Vincent and Theo* (1990), *Dreams* (1990), *Van Gogh* (1991).

Lust for Life so captured Van Gogh's life for the cinema that it took some thirty five years before other biopics on the artist began to appear.¹⁷¹ These were inspired by the proximity to the centenary of his death to be celebrated in 1990. The event was widely publicised in advance through Dutch government channels as it was seen as a major tourist attraction and revenue raiser.¹⁷² It is not surprising that several film producers saw this level of interest as an incentive to raise funds for a new film treatment of the artist.

analysing it or discussing it in an intellectual way, and simply relied on his intuition. Sarris (1963) prefers to attribute Minnelli's low status to his being primarily known as a director of musicals, which were not to be taken seriously as a genre and in any case were much more collaborative than other types of film and thus the director received less credit for the outcome. Recently there has been an outpouring of works on Minnelli, leading to a favourable reassessment of him as a true genius, who managed to impose his own style and developed his own themes and pre-occupations within the Hollywood system. See, for example, Levy (2009), McElhney (2009), Griffin (2010).

171 Without doing any systematic survey, it seems to me that upon any mention of films about painters in conversation, then *Lust for Life* is the film everyone, whatever the age group, first names and considers the definitive example.

172 Celebrations from April to July were centred round an exhibition of 133 paintings at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam and 248 drawings at the Kroller-Muller Museum in Otterlo together with a specially erected Van Gogh Village in the square outside the Amsterdam Museum (<http://www.nytimes.com/1990/04/02/arts/review-art-dutch-honor-van-gogh-in-centenary-show.html> Accessed 14/02/11). Altogether 1.25 million visitors attended the two major exhibitions (Kasumi, 1993: 413). 690,000 visitors were from overseas, with 130,000 from France and Belgium, 88,000 from Germany, 50,000 from Italy and 21,000 from the USA. The number of foreign visitors entering the Netherlands increased by 11.5% on the previous year (Kasumi, 1993: 417).

In celebrating the artist, the new film directors were faced with the fact that *Lust for Life* had clearly set down the standard interpretation of Van Gogh's life, myths and all. They needed to bring to the table a fresh approach to tempt the audience to dine. Two major works were to do this in very different ways. For Robert Altman directing *Vincent and Theo*, the focus was to be placed on the role of the family and in particular how the two Van Gogh brothers formed a close bond and whose lives were destined to reflect mirror images of one another. For Maurice Pialat, director of *Van Gogh* (1991), the key to his interpretation was that Van Gogh was very much just an ordinary man with simple tastes and needs living harmoniously in the rural community. The long outreach of the Van Gogh phenomenon is exemplified in the *Crows* section of Akira Kurosawa's *Dreams*, made in Japan, where Van Gogh is resurrected in a very different cultural milieu.¹⁷³

Altman signed up to direct *Vincent and Theo* at a fairly late stage in its development as he was both wary of entering a genre he considered was more often than not unworthy of its subject and he was holding out for other work that did not materialise. It was originally conceived as a four-part TV miniseries. Altman had no problem with this as some of his best work had been achieved in rejuvenating the crime drama series in the United States.¹⁷⁴ However, from the outset there was also to be released a shortened theatrical version for general cinema release and it is the latter that is available today.

The film begins with footage of the auction of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* at Sotheby's for \$22.5 million, so the iconic nature of the works is established immediately and the irony of the achievement of contemporary but not historical wealth is emphasised. The art market is set up as a form of theatre using documentary footage to imply a kind of hyper-reality. The scene then moves back in time to brothers Vincent and Theo in a peasant's hovel, with Altman's characteristic overlay of sound, as the auction continues on the soundtrack while we are back in the 1880s. Altman is at pains to introduce Van Gogh, not as the famous artist, but as an awkward 'creep' sponging off his brother (Hegeman, 1993:

173 Although no biopic emerged from the Netherlands itself, Van Gogh's homeland, there was a four-part television series directed by Jan Kesa and in the UK a specially written one-off tribute directed by Anna Benson Gyles for the *Omnibus* TV series.

174 Such as *Troubleshooters*, *US Marshal* and *Bus Stop*.

207) and in his wilder moods as an ancestor of a punk rocker (Naremore, 1993: 137). Here Tim Roth plays him idiosyncratically as a crude, rude Essex boy. The mythologies of *Lust for Life* are retained, and indeed the *mise-en-scène* of the earlier film is often copied, but the theme of the misunderstood artist is overlaid with a study of filial affection. This means the film does not concentrate entirely on Vincent or his point of view but is shared fairly evenly between the two brothers as Altman provides the audience with a privileged view of their experiences so it is made clear how similar predicaments are mirrored in each of their lives.

The mirroring of the brother's individual lives becomes an important element within Altman's study. This goes beyond the simple use of mirrors reflecting the participants, often in itself disclosing coded groupings that the participants themselves are unable to see, to a truly Lacanian treatment, where the brothers are mirror images of each other, only complete when the two are considered together. This is shown firstly in how their personalities, dress, and lifestyles complement one another. Theo is the sophisticated man about town but with intellectual leanings, living a family life in Paris, while Vincent is the boorish artisan, rather deliberately slumming things in the country. Secondly, events in their lives are echoed at the same time in the others. From the beginning the parallel lives alternate in the narration. As Vincent takes up with the prostitute Sien, so Theo meets Marie, who is also bold enough to suggest she wants to sleep with him. Neither relationship blossoms, as Sien is bored while Vincent paints and Marie is bored as Theo cannot bed her owing to his syphilis. Both women take the initiative to end the domestic arrangements. After they suddenly leave the film's first emotional climax occurs when both Vincent and Theo are sat in front of a mirror, one in the country, the other in Paris, and while Vincent spreads paint all over his facial features so Theo uses Marie's abandoned cosmetics, the rouge and powder. The tough country boy and the soft urban sophisticate both end up bedecked as a clown, morosely reflecting on their failure to hold on to a partner's affections. Neither has really passed through what Lacan (1949: 1) has called "the mirror phase" but have become symbiotic and indelibly linked together to form a whole. In exploring this duality of experience the film becomes much more about artistic and relationship failure rather than achievement. So much so that expectations are confounded, and the audience surprised, by the death of Vincent occurring ten

minutes before the end of the film. It is then Theo who lives on for a few more months who illustrates the full madness so often associated in the public's mind with Vincent. It is Theo who concludes the film naked, filthy, mad, and in chains in an asylum and, in another reversal of roles, vainly crying out for Vincent's help.

Pialat earned his living as a commercial artist until he was thirty years old and so it is no surprise that he felt an affinity with the struggles of Van Gogh. His aim was "the ultimate shattering of the myth" (Pinxteren, 1993: 205), an attempt to get completely away from any hint of biographic cliché, especially the artist as tortured, hysterical genius. By concentrating solely on the last months of his life, April to July 1890, the traumas of ear slicing and admittance into an asylum are completely avoided. The melodrama, so quintessential to *Lust for Life*, can be missed out. Even his eventual suicide is depicted off-screen. It comes as a surprise to the audience as Pialat jumps from Vincent's return by train to Auvers from a Paris café-brothel where he has been dancing the night away, to Vincent walking towards the village later in the day clutching his wounded side.¹⁷⁵ The ex-legionnaire attached to the local brothel, whose girls are having their daily constitutional nearby, recognises Vincent is in trouble, sees the blood on his clothes and calls for a horse carriage to take him back to his lodgings urgently. The following deathbed scene is long and poignant, but largely silent even when Theo arrives. The two brothers simply hold hands, as words seem to fail them or are unnecessary as their bond is so close. The opportunity is taken to present the man simply as a human being. We absorb Pialat's fantasy of Van Gogh the real man. This is an ordinary person rather than a historical personage. As Oliver Kohn suggests (1991: 10), "Pialat has not systematically adopted Van Gogh's point of view and by not placing him on a pedestal...makes of Van Gogh a character not unlike the others...". This ties in with the growth of a new myth surrounding Van Gogh, with him depicted primarily as a diligent and conscientious craftsman. If his paintings are worth so many millions the artist producing them must be hardworking and

¹⁷⁵ Pialat has given two hints earlier in the film of how Vincent might take his life. Vincent discusses the topic with the ex-legionnaire by the riverside and the legionnaire warns Vincent that shooting oneself, "It takes guts." Mid-way through the film, when alone in his bedroom, Vincent produces a revolver and pretends to shoot himself with it.

conscientious rather than a madman and a wastrel dependent on the charity of others (Pollock, 1993: 219).

The audience is presented with Vincent Van Gogh as “a normal man of flesh and blood” (Hegeman, 1993: 215) who moves through the quiet village of Auvers-sur-Oise barely noticed. He is not even given the shock of brilliant red hair that in real life made him immediately noticeable. He is observed amongst his surroundings, almost as part of the landscape, taking his mood from nature and his companions, but reflecting the atmosphere rather than events being presented from his point of view. He is not a catalyst but an observer. The fact that the man is a genius is simply taken for granted and Pialat never tries to prove it. The underlying supposition appears to be that a rather understated portrayal of the man behind the legend will automatically expose his greatness as an artist. To the people around him Van Gogh is “always more of a lodger than a legend” (Lane, 1992: 18). He is not treated as an ‘outsider’ by the villagers even though he has only just arrived. He simply fits into the patterns of local life without being made out to be particularly likeable. For example, the innkeeper’s wife blows hot and cold over having him as a lodger. She complains fiercely about her husband allowing Vincent to paint indoors in one of their backrooms, but she is the only person to weep and appear truly upset when he dies. Vincent retains his close family ties with brother Theo and his wife Jo even though he is residing out in the country. He is small in stature, not particularly fit and rather seedy. This is coupled with an emphasis on his activities that show him as a virile, fornicating peasant, chased by women, rather than him fruitlessly chasing them as in other versions of his life. Pialat actually emphasises this side of the man, with an intense sensuality brought out in the ‘set-pieces’ such as the brothel on the riverbank, first glimpsed in the heat of a beautiful summer’s day, where the light and colours of impressionist paintings are copied in a reference to French painting going beyond the immediate scope of Van Gogh’s work.¹⁷⁶ This provides a strong tension in the

¹⁷⁶ The rural retreat in the height of summer provides a setting for richly coloured and lingering shots of sensuous activities of eating, dancing and lovemaking in the style of Seurat’s riverbank, Renoir’s country dance, Degas’s women bathing, or Toulouse-Lautrec’s gay Paris. Those girls on the river bank who are wearing street clothes are in shades of red, suggesting the lustful desires underlying the picnic, where sexual themes dominate the conversation. Vincent complains in particular that he no longer has the sexual drive he exhibited when in Arles.

images within a meandering and slow narrative as the basic elements of Van Gogh's story by this stage are fairly restrained compared to the melodramatics that have preceded it.

When Van Gogh is introduced he has already been through many traumas and is already "burned out, disenchanted, alcoholic, and ultimately turning away from everything that might dissuade him from his self-destructive course" (Lopate, 2004: 49). This leaves him introspective and highly sensitive, trying to make sense of and overcome his depressive tendencies, which are aggravated by his relationships with women and his failure to find a buyer for his work. He is mainly very subdued, only occasionally having quite violent emotional outbursts. His inner torments are to a large extent hidden, partly as they are sufficiently exhibited in his urge to suicide and inability to sustain a relationship, and partly in the style of acting employed by Jacques Dutronc as Vincent. This former cabaret singer keeps his features very mask-like, though his body can be like a whip-lash, very quick to move and suggest tension.¹⁷⁷ However, the heart of the performance lies in the face, with constant use of close-ups revealing every tiny feature. The face has to be read as a book indicting what is going on underneath as Pialat has eschewed the use of explanations from the Van Gogh brothers' correspondence or any other kind of voice-over. Although Vincent is present in nearly every scene he is not always the centre of attention, as Pialat uses long long-shot cinematography to distance the audience and to often relegate Vincent to the margins of the frame. Again he merely becomes part of the whole action not the whole reason for its existence. Although Van Gogh was painting furiously the film gives hardly any attention to his work. It acknowledges his profession in the opening sequence but then seldom returns to the act of artistic creation. Nor does it pay any attention to his letters to Theo, which must have absorbed his evenings.

The slow pace of life feels appropriate and being filmed actually in Auvers it is realistic. Without a strong dramatic narrative the film revolves around a handful of grand set pieces, orchestrated very carefully and owing to the long running time they are allowed to develop slowly and appear very natural. The luncheon party was originally

177 He won the French Cesar award for Best Actor in 1992 for this role.

thirteen minutes long, but Pialet eventually trimmed it down to six minutes. Here, Theo and Jo come to lunch at Doctor Gachet's. There is an opportunity for each person at the luncheon to both have their moment in the spotlight and to develop their character in depth so that it can be felt by the audience that they have a life outside the film frame. The atmosphere of a genial family party is built up from the first joyous cuddling of his nephew by Vincent at the train station, through to each guest presenting their party piece for the entertainment of those gathered. The servants are fully included in this circle, including their performing a popular ballad. The banter becomes quite crude when Vincent launches into his Toulouse-Lautrec impersonation, with the help of Theo as his 'arms'.¹⁷⁸ The minor characters are allowed to make an impression throughout the film. For example, the village idiot quite naturally appears several times as Vincent wanders through the backstreets and each time he hounds Vincent for a quick portrait, which sometimes Vincent stops to provide out of kindness and on other occasions he ignores. Indeed, with its long running time and gentle pace, at times the film almost defaults into giving precedence to recreating a social anthropology of the village rather than providing an insight into the life of Van Gogh. Van Gogh becomes a background figure weaving in and out of the daily life of Auvers, rather than, as one would expect, the daily round of the village forming the background to Van Gogh's life.¹⁷⁹

Where the film's trailer sees Van Gogh's life entirely as a round of sex or painting, the film itself moves between the rituals of a long Summer al-fresco meal to the languid riverbank where the town's prostitutes come out to play at weekends, all activity being restrained by the bright scorching sun. The humanisation of Vincent is very much that he

178 Vincent performs the following limerick: "My name's Toulouse-Lautrec/ I'm a handsome wreck./ I get my inspiration/ in places of damnation./ Although I'm short of leg/ all the ladies beg./ So hide your wives from the meanie./ They all want to taste my wienie!" The Gachet household appears very liberal in its attitudes, the Doctor having already requested his housekeeper's presence in his bed the previous evening. The total picture moves far away from the depiction of pure domestic bliss portrayed at the start of the film when the Doctor arrives home from work to find his evening meal ready and his daughter singing and playing the piano. In this context the luncheon appears subversive, preparing the audience for Vincent's later escapades with the Doctor's daughter, Marguerite.

179 For example, when Marguerite and Vincent return from Paris on the milk train, the interesting progress of the ticket-collector along the train, having mastered how to proceed relatively safely along the outside of the train on the running board while it is moving, is foregrounded. Further, when the couple enters the village having disembarked, Pialet cannot resist close-ups of the blacksmith at work in his smithy as they walk along the main street.

could whore and drink alongside the rest of the village. As American critic Georgia Brown (1992: 62) has highlighted, that for the first time in a Van Gogh biopic, it isn't just that the depiction of his character feels real, it is essential that the man is fully sexualised, and in her street parlance, he "has balls." To secure this effect Pialat quite openly invented an affair between Van Gogh and the daughter of Dr Gachet, in whose house he was lodging.¹⁸⁰ However, Pialat decided to make such a love affair the very heart of his film because "the presence of the Gachet daughter is only the proof of what I wish to advance: Vincent Van Gogh was a man like any other". In the same interview he uses the usual excuse provided by directors of biopics when embellishing their story, that "despite the liberties I've taken, I think I am closer to the truth than all the 'authorised' biographies." The link between Marguerite and Vincent was even closer in the first cut of the film, as it presented the story as a flashback by Marguerite looking back on her times with the painter just after attending his funeral. In emphasising Van Gogh's physical pleasures, Pialat makes it more difficult for the audience to empathise with Vincent's situation. Life does not seem so bad when a nubile young virgin will surrender herself to you in between riotous dances at a Parisian café-brothel. Dutronc has to work very hard to counterbalance the gaiety with the suggestion of the quick mood switches of manic depression. In his silence and sulkiness he can appear simply deliberately perverse, awkward and selfish rather than the misunderstood genius with a grave health problem.

Kurosawa's episodic film *Dreams* was not directly inspired by the Van Gogh centenary but simply captures Kurosawa's most potent dreams. However, because of the director's love of the artist's work it is not stretching credulity to believe that he was aware of the date significance and this may have encouraged him to include the sequence when he had to cut his eleven planned sequences down to eight for reasons of cost and running time. What is clear is that the *Crows* sequence that features Van Gogh and some of his works exposes the two-way interaction between the artist and Japan (which country also represents the East in general). Van Gogh's debt to Japanese culture is acknowledged not only by his very inclusion in the film in the *Crows*, but also directly, in for example *The*

180 In an interview in *Le Monde* on 9 May 1991 (cited in London Film Festival, 1991: 1) he described how he had met Marguerite Gachet in 1953 and been informed that there was no relationship between her and Vincent.

Peach Orchard sequence as well, which evokes his late paintings of fruit trees in bloom (Johnston, 1990: 13). Likewise by including Van Gogh suggests Kurosawa is paying homage to the influence of his unique form of western art on Japanese culture generally. Using Martin Scorsese to play Van Gogh in turn not only pays homage to Scorsese as film director but also to the whole group of American filmmakers who agreed to club together and finance the film out of tribute to Kurosawa's genius.¹⁸¹ The episode is also autobiographical, as Kurosawa had practiced as a commercial artist before becoming a film director. Like Van Gogh he had also attempted suicide (in 1971). The young artist in the sequence, played by Terao Akira is called "I" in the cast list, dresses in a typical outfit from the 1950s that is similar to those worn by Kurosawa in photographs of the time, including his trade-mark soft hat.

However, looked at from a different cultural perspective, Kodera (1993a: 194) feels it is important to remind Western critics that the Van Gogh sequence is primarily "a symbolic portrait of the Japanese in the post-war era" and is more informative about cultural attitudes in Japan than it is about Van Gogh. His analysis places great importance on the use of the phrase "like a locomotive," an expression used by Van Gogh in one of his letters. Kurosawa's Vincent talks of his efforts to capture the beauty of nature and working like a locomotive to accomplish this. Kurosawa repeatedly uses both the image and the noise of a locomotive interjected into scenes of Van Gogh frantically absorbed in trying to paint scenes from nature. Kodera considers the "working like a locomotive" refers to the enormous effort by the Japanese nation to recover from both material and spiritual poverty after the second-world war.¹⁸² It then took more "work like a locomotive" for the Japanese to reach a level of prosperity when they finally "relinquished their idealised projection of Van Gogh", came to appreciate him for what he

181 As well as Scorsese, Steven Spielberg, George Lucas and Brian De Palma had helped bankroll Kurosawa's work (Walker, 1990: 32).

182 Knowledge of Van Gogh was based only on poor quality reproductions and there was great confusion when an exhibition of his original works was displayed in 1958 and the public could see what they were really like.

was and began to enter the art market for his works, leading up to the hyper-inflated prices for his work in recent years.¹⁸³

The *Crows* sequence contains some outstanding and advanced CGI work for its time. This enables “I” not only to be transported from looking at canvases in a museum into a live reproduction of the *Langlois Bridge*, but at other points to actually be present in and walk around within the paths and roads of reproductions of the paintings. “I” chases after Van Gogh through a Van Gogh landscape of French villages.¹⁸⁴

The *Crows* episode sits in the middle of the film between a first half which pays particular attention to traditional Japanese ritual and culture and before a second half which becomes more a series of polemical tracts against man’s destruction of the environment than a series of dreams (Tookey, 1990: viii).¹⁸⁵ The lyricism of the first half contrasts with the nightmarish quality of the second. The works of Van Gogh provide a refuge in the middle, although this is not without anxiety as “I” is constantly seeking a disappearing artist, as if the true meaning and solace within the paintings is always just out of reach. The depressed state of mind, which led to Kurosawa’s attempted suicide, remains ever present and a constant danger, only kept at bay by constantly “working like a locomotive.” The fragility of Van Gogh’s state of mind and his propensity to madness is emphasised when “I” is physically sucked into a painting in a museum. The washerwomen by the river of whom he inquires, “Do you know where Vincent Van Gogh lives?” warn him, “Monsieur, be careful. He’s been in a lunatic asylum” and they laugh heartily at the joke. When “I” does eventually meet up with Van Gogh the latter talks very fast and not entirely coherently, climaxing his comments on the view before them with “I consume the

183 Serper (2001: passim) finds the film makes much more sense once it is realised it follows the structures of *nō* theatre. The film then generates a unity when on the surface it simply appears to be a series of disjointed episodes.

184 This was achieved as George Lucas offered Kurosawa special use of facilities at his American company Industrial Light and Sound. The special effects are “special” but not always exactly what Kurosawa had wanted because of the difficulties of communication across the Pacific and in different languages (Malcolm, 1990: 36). Many had to be redone. The results still provide “an ocular banquet” (McGill, 1990: 55).

185 The film became the rallying point for the New Brutalism poetry group, whose members all lived and worked in the San Francisco Bay Area, mostly in and around Mills College at the Millennium. The collected poems of the group continued Kurosawa’s “scathing commentary on the consequences of modern life, our nuclear condition, and our distance from utopian ideals” (Cross, 2003: Preface).

natural setting. I devour it completely and wholly, and then when I'm through, the picture appears before me, complete. *But it is so difficult to hold it inside*" (my italics), emphasising how difficult it is for him to contain so many strong ideas that build up within his mind. Van Gogh is presented complete with ear bandage and "I" does ask, "Are you all right? You appear to be injured." Van Gogh replies very matter-of-factly "Yesterday I was trying to complete a self-portrait and I just couldn't get the ear right so I cut it off and threw it away." This matter-of-factness about such a traumatic action again suggests an underlying madness. His last words to "I" are "The sun – it compels me to paint. I can't stand here wasting my time talking to you." This solar influence harkens back to Minnelli's emphasis on the power of sunlight, with orange and yellow colours predominating in sequences of *Lust for Life* in the sections set in the South of France.

3.4. Van Gogh the Time Traveller: *Besuch bei van Gogh* (Visiting Van Gogh, 1985), *Vincent et Moi* (Vincent and Me, 1990), *Starry Night* (1999), and *Full Moon Fables* (2003).

Alongside the making of serious biographical studies it must be mentioned that the interpretation of Van Gogh has extended twice in popular romances to the reincarnation of the painter in modern times, and also twice, a heroine has traveled back in time with the specific intent of meeting the genius. This is another indication that there is a market for multiple variations on the man as relevant to today. The simple way to make him available for exploitation is for him to return and take on the attributes of the modern man that are thought desirable at the time the film is made, as in *Starry Night* and *Full Moon Fables*. On the other hand in *Besuch bei van Gogh* and *Vincent et Moi* the heroine transports her twentieth-century values with her back to the nineteenth and finds a Vincent in remarkable sympathy with the current notion of the 'new man'. While only *Vincent et Moi* is specifically aimed at children, the plot and simple style of *Besuch bei van Gogh* and *Starry Night* are not far off this category. For *Starry Night* disbelief has to accept that Van Gogh returns to Pasadena after being buried for 100 years and right in the middle of the annual Rose Parade.¹⁸⁶ There is a strong relationship in all these films to the European fairytale tradition with common features as analysed by Propp (1968). The fabula in these tales works on two levels, a surface level and a deeper level, providing elements appealing to both the child and the adult. The films make a good starting point for getting a young audience interested in art, and *Vincent et moi* also appeared as Number 11 in the book series 'Tales For All', designed with the educational remit of initiating group discussion on the wider issues surrounding moral responsibilities of theft, fraud and copying of artworks as well as the potential perils of fame and fortune (Cooper, 1991: 1). This is the world seen directly from the child's point of view, so the child may realise that they can make decisions that will affect both themselves and the worlds around them. The film roots its heroine in a safe affectionate family situation as all the family see Jo off to Holland at the train station and all are there to welcome her back in triumph. This viewpoint arises from the director's, Michael Rubbo's, decades of work for

186 He is resurrected because he drank a magic potion concocted by one of the peasant women who posed in *The Potato Eaters*. This spell would enable him to return to the land of the living for 100 days in 100 years time.

the National Film Board of Canada. A young audience's interest is maintained by sending the two teenage leads from Canada to Amsterdam. Here, a third member of the team, a Dutch boy, Joris, who has his own endearing miniature tug, the *Krakatoa*, to explore the waterways, augments them. By a combination of *bateau-mouche* and the tug they take the viewer to all the main tourist sights visible from the water plus throw in interesting local colour such as furniture being delivered to a canal-side house by a built-in pulley to bring the pieces into the house via the windows of the upper floor.

In all these incarnations, Van Gogh is shown as a friendly well-intentioned individual. Fortunately he speaks perfect English, but then he has worked in London. To be fair, in *Vincent et moi* he is first shown tramping dusty lanes and described as "A crazy Dutchman living in France" while the 114 year old Jeanne Louise Calment remembers him, from when she was thirteen and working in her uncle's fabric shop in Arles, as "rough, rude and ugly, and I didn't like him".¹⁸⁷ However, he is redeemed for the film by his friendliness, his willingness to share his picnic lunch with Jo and his handsome features. In *Starry Night* he becomes truly altruistic, wanting to make the world a better place for artists, though he is willing to steal back what he considers rightfully his in order to fund the enterprise.¹⁸⁸ In *Vincent et moi*, Jo first learns about Van Gogh from receiving dozens of posters of his flower paintings to decorate her hospital room instead of real flowers, so Van Gogh is immediately associated with recovery from serious illness and a raising of patient morale.¹⁸⁹ In the *State of the Artist* segment of *Full Moon Fables*,¹⁹⁰ Van Gogh

187 Calment became famous at 113 as reporters gathered material for the Van Gogh celebrations. A documentary film of her life, *Beyond 120 Years with Jeanne Calment*, was made in 1995. She lived to 122 years and 164 days (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeanne-Calment). *Vincent et moi* made her the oldest person ever to appear in a motion picture. Rubbo's scoop in filming an interview with Calment is exploited by using it to book-end the film. The end footage has a double-edged effect, as Jo's questioning of Calment appears rather cruel and tactless, rather deliberately confusing her and showing her up as a figure of affectionate fun rather than a sober eye-witness to history.

188 He is not at all aggressive or frightening. He is portrayed rather like Quentin Crisp, wearing a large floppy hat and exhibiting effeminate mannerisms, with a voice "sounding and acting like a B-pic leprechaun" (Harvey, 1999: 1).

189 The naïve paintings of Henri Rousseau are also used in the film to entertain a teenage audience. Something very colourful and exotic, even with a hint of wildness, that might appeal to those who thought Van Gogh flowers too sissy or boring. Felix, Jo's admirer at summer drama school, presents her with a book of Rousseau's paintings which gives her inspiration for scenery depicting a rain forest for a pro-environment play with magic being performed by the Summer School as a whole.

190 The director, Edward B. Sherman, started as a stand-up comic in local Washington nightclubs. On moving to Los Angeles he entered UCLA's extension programme and *State of the Artist* first appeared as a 25 minute student short (<http://www.sleepwalkerproductions.com/edbio.htm>). Accessed 08/10/2010.

appears to an angry elderly contemporary artist, who has been permitted to paint a copy of Vincent's work within the gallery actually alongside where the original is displayed. He is depicted as the gallant saviour of someone who is quite objectionable. Van Gogh repaints his masterpiece overnight to replace the original the grumpy old artist has damaged. At the same time Van Gogh reforms the painter and makes him into a better human being with proper consideration for others.¹⁹¹ Van Gogh and Gauguin do not appear fiercely engaged in argument, but as a comedy duo, the Gauguin with a strong cod accent. The lightweight comic approach incorporated in these films can be compared to the recent effort of Woody Allen (2011: 4) to pay irreverent homage to some of the painters and writers who have inspired him in the film *Midnight in Paris* (2011). He said in interview at the films' Cannes premiere that "To write dialogue for Picasso or Hemingway or Scott Fitzgerald was simple because I wasn't trying to make them meaningful and deep or profound characters. I was trying to make them just amusing or entertaining." These words could equally apply to the films under discussion in Section 3.4., as the character of Vincent Van Gogh never steps beyond the one-dimensional and is deliberately simplistic to reach a wide family audience.

Starry Night pioneered the use of High Definition video for transfer to 35mm.¹⁹² The small budget does affect the film as a whole, in the poor quality of the actors and the settings, particularly the phoney backdrops of France, together with disembodied sounding dialogue plus a background score played on a limited synthesiser. It provides an unbalanced mixture of lame comedy, romance and thrills and is not helped by the feeling that the four leads appear to be acting in entirely separate movies. In the scene where Kathy's handbag is snatched and Vincent chases after the mugger, any sense of excitement is lost as the actors involved play the whole episode so unconvincingly.

191 The complete fantasy is reinforced by ignoring any realistic practical problems – that anyone would be allowed to paint next to such works in the first place, that a museum has electronic security systems in place, or that paint needs to dry before canvases can be easily moved.

192 This saved \$250,000 on a budget of only \$1.3 million. DigiBeta was used together with PAL technology to ensure quality control at all times and a greater colour resolution and superior colour process. There were problems from time to time with contrast but preview audiences were not aware that the image originated on digital tape (Smith, 1999: 38). The director, Paul Davids was a Universal vice-president who wanted a practical experience of moviemaking, and had already worked on two documentaries, *Timothy Leary's Dead* (1996) for the cinema and *Roswell* (1994) for television (Nesbit, 2006b: 1).

Consequently, the way the incident is supposed to cement a growing relationship between Vincent and Kathy fails.

3.5. Full circle: Vincent Van Gogh as mad genius; *The Eyes of Van Gogh* (2005)

Alexander Barnett, who had lectured on Van Gogh across Europe, saw the gap in coverage of Van Gogh's life and wrote, acted in and directed *The Eyes of Van Gogh* that recreates the year Vincent spent inside the lunatic asylum at St Remy. In this sense the analysis of films about Van Gogh has come full circle and returns to his interpretation as a mad genius. However, the situation is very different to that of *Lust for Life* when it was released in 1956. Barnett's has been called "a superindie film" because of its miniscule budget (Johnson, 2008:1).¹⁹³ It is also marketed on the Amazon 'print on demand' system, so it heralds a possible way forward for small filmmakers to sell their goods without the backing of a large organisation. While there are numerous shots of Vincent painting, no canvases are shown in the film to avoid payment/copyright issues. The film is very verbose, being heavily based on Vincent's and Dr. Perrone's letters to Theo and as spoken they feel rather arch and stiff, too much like a formal art history lesson. The director, Alexander Barnett, himself plays Van Gogh and is physically a good look-alike, very gaunt, and he plays the role as suitably intense and earnest. The extent of Vincent's illness is suggested by the frequent use of a hand-held camera and a 360-degree rotation. The claustrophobic nature of the asylum is emphasised by the use of close-ups of the face or face and chest only, sometimes opened out by showing hallucinations and nightmares in the hospital grounds and dramatising events that took place in Arles. The most successful section is the confrontation between Van Gogh and Gauguin, where Lee Godart as Gauguin offers a believable figure whose ethos and nature so contrasts with Van Gogh's, and a conflict becomes inevitable. There is also a constant use of overlapping dissolves for scene transitions, which creates a disturbing oniric sensation as one scene metamorphoses into another. The budget restrictions made Barnett seek cheap solutions in his recreations of key events in Vincent's life. The close-ups for speeches provide a justifiable concentration on the dialogue. Some image sequences are strikingly effective,

193 The total budget was \$150,000 (<http://www.mandy.com/1/film3.cfm?id=7658> Accessed 14/12/2007).

as when the extras hold up lanterns in the gloom to evoke a crowd of miners; and the communal eating in the asylum canteen resembles the peasant's eating their potato soup.¹⁹⁴

A very simplistic view of Van Gogh's emotional problems is taken. All explanations revolve around, and keep returning to, the image of Vincent as a child pounding on his elder brother's grave. The brother was also called Vincent and died soon after birth, a year before Vincent was born. Vincent was then brought up to a constant repetition from his parents that he was a poor substitute for his dead brother, so he came to hate the memory of the baby. While Theo is shown as generous, if feeble, Vincent is not portrayed sympathetically. It is suggested that he bleeds Theo dry in his self-centred urge to paint. Even more damningly he shows jealousy of Theo's child, being willing to smother it because he fears it will mean Theo has less money available to send to him. The overriding dream of founding a 'studio in the sun' in Southern France becomes more important than the failing health of his brother.

3.6. Conclusion

"It is an indisputable fact that the magnitude of the popularity of Van Gogh knows no parallel...with Van Gogh, however, we have a quite extraordinary phenomenon – great art here becomes popular in the true sense" (Novotny, 1953: 114-115). This popularity has not necessarily translated into box-office success in the cinema or the making of great masterpieces. It remains a predominantly North American viewpoint of his life being spread around the globe, led for an older generation by the relative success of *Lust for Life*. The North American bias may also suggest the importance of the value of his works when analysing these films. Money definitely talks and in the cinema it leads Van Gogh to be portrayed increasingly as the hard working misunderstood painter, moving away from the outsider and mad genius. He becomes the subject of art cinema or children's films rather than the adult commercial cinema. He is made likeable for the young market but

¹⁹⁴ What is more problematic is the repetition of scenes in the asylum grounds where the other patients lurch around and attempt to surround and grab Vincent. While intended to convey his paranoia they too often resemble poor imitations of zombie flesh eaters in B films.

can remain abusive, obsessive, a whiner, absolutely impossible to live with for the adult public.

Chapter 4. The British artist biopic: a hidden dose of *duende*

In Chapter 3 the representation of a single artist, Vincent Van Gogh, was traced across national boundaries and examined to investigate how the nature of the artist has been depicted and is linked to changes over place as well as time. In this chapter a complimentary approach looks at the total output of artist biopics from a single country, the United Kingdom, to see what national elements, if any, emerge as common features and how they might have changed or evolved over time. The significance of both *Rembrandt* (1936) and the meeting of three avant-garde British artist biopics in the early 1970s, *Savage Messiah*, *Edvard Munch*, and *A Bigger Splash*, have already been explored in Chapter 2. This chapter will concentrate on material relating to the mainstream films of the 1950s and all British artist biopics from the 1980s to 2010.

What actually merits the label of being identified as a 'British' film has in itself been a matter of considerable debate. The situation has become even more complicated in recent years with a dependence on inward financing and co-operative productions. As Higson (2000a: 245) has pointed out, "any British film with more than a very modest budget has received some degree of American funding." In addition the home market remains too small for other than the cheapest production to make a profit solely within the UK.¹⁹⁵ The tastes of foreign markets need to be taken into account to ensure a profit. Such factors clearly have the ability to influence both the type of film made and the personnel involved in it, increasing the odds against such productions maintaining a specifically British feel. In fact, Higson (2000: 40, 46) argues that "the complexities of transnationalism and multiculturalism" have resulted in what had been seen as a 'national cinema' being replaced by a 'post-national cinema', embracing multiculturalism, difference and hybridity rather than a unitary set of British values.

¹⁹⁵ For example, Murphy (2000b: 5) has calculated that in the 1990s only films with a budget under £3 million might break even on a limited UK national release, if it included the multiplexes. From the mid-1970s to the late 1980s the sole British market, with dwindling audiences, was not large enough to permit this.

There has been a move away from a unitary British outlook and a single meaningful British identity. For instance, with the growth of political devolution, as well as the strengthening of Irish, Welsh and Scottish culture, there has arisen the identification of a distinctly English cinema and theatre (Blandford, 2007: 7), even a regional English cinema as suggested by the arrival near the same date of the industrial northern settings of *The Full Monty* (1997), *Brassed Off* (1996) and *Billy Elliot* (2000) and the Shane Meadows' Midlands trilogy of *Twenty Four Seven* (1997), *A Room for Romeo Brass* (1999) and *Once Upon a Time in the Midlands* (2002).

In this chapter the culturally British films have been given precedence over the industrially British films.¹⁹⁶ For example, *Miss Potter* (2006) is included because of its depiction of one of Britain's most loved book illustrators, even though its star, Renee Zellweger, is American. Also, in the case of *Nightwatching* (2007) and *Edvard Munch* (1974), their directors continue to produce essentially British works even if they work and are funded from abroad. This reflects their greater affinity to European traditions in cinema rather than attempting to emulate Hollywood (Petrie, 1991: 210). Such attitudes in turn have opened up sources of European finance accompanied by a greater critical recognition on the Continent than is given at home in the UK. Out of the mainstream, their product requires more attention from its audience as such directors are more interested in exploring form rather than providing a strong narrative. Within the Merchant/Ivory team, whose productions have become synonymous with a British 'heritage cinema', the director is American, the producer is Indian and the scriptwriter a Polish Jew. The full list of what has been selected as British films for the purposes of this chapter is given on the next page.

Of the seventeen British made artist biopics, seven have a non- British subject: Caravaggio, Vermeer, Rembrandt (twice), Munch, Dali, and Picasso.¹⁹⁷ Three artists

¹⁹⁶ This is also reflected in recent government policy in relation to the film industry, where a Cultural Test was introduced in 2007 to determine how far a film could be identified as British. More emphasis is placed within the test on how far the film deals thematically with aspects of UK national cultural heritage rather than on its financial origins and the nationality of personnel (Higson, 2011: 9).

¹⁹⁷ I have included Henri Gaudier-Brzeska in the British connection as he moved to London in 1910 at the age of nineteen.

worked in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: Caravaggio, Vermeer and Rembrandt. Two were in the nineteenth century: Edvard Munch and Philip Wilson Steer. The bulk fall into the twentieth century: Gaudier-Brzeska, Dali, Picasso, Hockney and Bacon, plus the fictional creations of Gully Simpson and Tony Hancock, with six covering post-World War Two. The display is rounded off in 2009 by the overview of the British art world provided in *Boogie Woogie*.

In production terms, the British artist biopic reflects three industrial categories of filming and marketing, which I have labelled as the 'heritage', the 'mainstream' and the 'art-house and avant-garde'.

British artist biopics by type of production

<u>Heritage</u>	<u>Mainstream</u>	<u>Avant-garde/Art-House</u>
Rembrandt (1936)	The Horse's Mouth (1958)	Savage Messiah (1972)
My Left Foot (1989)	The Rebel (1961)	Edvard Munch (1974)
The Bridge (1992)		A Bigger Splash (1974)
Carrington (1995)		Caravaggio (1986)
Surviving Picasso (1996)		Love is the Devil (1998)
Girl with a Pearl Earring (2003)		Nightwatching (2007)
Miss Potter (2006)		Little Ashes (2008)
		Boogie Woogie (2009)

By their very nature as historical features dealing with famous personalities from the past, the most successful of the films in box-office terms have been what have become known as 'heritage films'. The appeal of spectacle, quality acting and high production values, together with a strong narrative have provided films that have appealed across both cinematic genres and age groups for their audience, together with an exotic appeal to other countries. Higson (1995: 27) originally suggested a wide definition for the heritage film as "the reproduction of literary texts, artefacts and landscapes which already have a privileged status within the accepted definition of national heritage [...and] the

reconstruction of a historical moment which is assumed to be of historical significance.", so embracing several genres, the adaptation, the costume drama and historical films. Typically the heritage works have been seen, rather disparagingly, to focus on upper class households in large establishments in a rather claustrophobic setting where the audience can bathe in a warm glow of nostalgia for a past Britain where there was a perpetual summer and always time for a cream tea on the lawn.

The mainstream productions are contemporary stories designed for mass appeal. In the case of British artist biopics they were two comedies reliant on the box-office pull of their two stars, Alec Guinness in *The Horse's Mouth* and Tony Hancock in *The Rebel*.¹⁹⁸ The painters each played in these films may be fictional characters but they convey concisely the prevailing public attitudes towards modern art and its practitioners just at the period when the revival of national fortunes after the Second World War freed some resources for the return of cultural niceties above the basic needs for survival, encouraging the rebuilding of the art market.

The avant-garde and art-house productions are low-budget productions, with an innovative agenda, either with an experimental format or aimed at a niche audience. There is often an overlap between the two categories, with, for instance, the work of Derek Jarman or Peter Greenaway developing from being the avant-garde into the regular art house market. Following the death of Derek Jarman, and having worked closely with him, John Maybury has in turn kept the spirit of his work alive.

These three categories can be cross-related to the marketing categories defining the UK film distribution network since the 1980s. The marketplace is dominated by the popular multiplex outlets, mainly showing Hollywood fare and aimed primarily at younger audiences. There is also a middlebrow audience of middle-class, largely middle-aged members. Thirdly lies a series of specialised or niche markets. The biggest box-office

¹⁹⁸ Building on his fan base from his radio and television programmes, the box-office success of *The Rebel* enabled Tony Hancock to embark on a sold-out six-week tour in 3000 seater theatres across the country (Wilmut, 1978: 116).

successes obviously occur for those films whose appeal cross-overs between audience and genre categories.

The outstanding reason for the bulk of British artist biopics getting made has been the intense personal commitment of their directors to the work of, and sometimes the life itself of, the painter being depicted, whether this be simply on a level of admiring his genius or with the greater involvement of recognising them as an alter-ego. This point has already been illustrated for *Rembrandt* (see Chapter 2.1:30), *Savage Messiah* (Chapter 2.6: 78) and *Edvard Munch* (Chapter 2.6: 79). This proselytising fervour continues up-to-date.

Chapter 4.1. Origins of British artist biopics.

The origins of *The Horse's Mouth* and *The Rebel* were very similar in that both their stars were seeking a plum role and became actively involved in the film's development, so it was gradually modified to fit their specific requirements. Alec Guinness, who starred in *The Horse's Mouth*, was looking for a good part for himself, rather than having any specific interest in painting (Neame, 2003: 158). The novel on which the film is based was published in 1944 and Guinness considered it so interesting that while working on other films he began to write his own screenplay.¹⁹⁹ Following his success in *The Bridge Over the River Kwai* (1957), Guinness possessed 'star power' and approached director Ronald Neame, with whom he had worked successfully before, to promote the idea of a film version of Carey's book.²⁰⁰ In fact, it was eventually backed by United Artists solely because of a personal favour owed to Neame by one of the Board, and not strictly upon the film's potential commercial or aesthetic merits. Once backed financially, Guinness, Neame and the executive producer were left a free hand to develop the project as they chose (Neame, 2002).

¹⁹⁹ Guinness had some experience of editing texts in the theatre, but this was to be his one and only screenplay (Hunter, 1982: 54). He began to write it as early as Spring 1954 and was given to understand while in Hollywood filming *The Swan* (Charles Vidor, 1956), that MGM would back the project, but this came to nothing (Read, 2003: 239). The screenplay was subsequently nominated for an Oscar in 1959.

²⁰⁰ Neame (2003: 160) was under no illusions and thought the idea would be difficult to sell to backers because of the rambling nature of the book's narrative and the unsympathetic view of the leading character, Gulley Jimson.

The Rebel was to star Tony Hancock, then at the peak of his success, and the Associated British Picture Corporation was eager to back a film to cash in on this. Hancock had developed a strong comic persona during his long-running radio and television shows, keeping the same scriptwriters, Galton and Simpson, who allowed the character to grow and change. For the film they developed the story of a naive painter (Hancock) who quit his life as a civil servant in the sleepy London suburb of East Cheam, the domestic setting of all the radio and television series, to be plunged into the bohemian world of modern art in Paris with its traditional associations of both culture and scandal. The role that Hancock played remained named as Hancock so the actor could continue using specially emphasised aspects of his own characterisation that had proved so successful on television.²⁰¹

The longest gestation for any of these biopics is for Derek Jarman's *Caravaggio*, which his muse Tilda Swinton (2007) thought was at least ten years, and certainly draft scripts survive from as early as 1979 (Peake, 1999: 346).²⁰² The cheap entrée level approach available to say Russell in 1972 for *Savage Messiah* or Hazan in 1974 for *A Bigger Splash* had disappeared as costs had risen, particularly with a tightening of union regulations and policing. Jarman needed £475,000 for *Caravaggio*, even when using minimalist sets and paying only minimum rates to friends, on whom he could trade in his favours owed.²⁰³ Channel 4 provided £250,000 or 54% of the total money,²⁰⁴ the rest

201 For the first time Hancock himself insisted on being involved in writing the screenplay and devising the 'funny business' as he saw the potential of a hit film leading to the launch of a career in the United States (Fisher, 2008: 303). The artist Sean Kenny has suggested Hancock, the man, secretly aspired to being an artist. He thought Hancock to be a highly talented cartoonist and sketcher (Walker, 1993: 106).

202 The working version of the screenplay, which was published, was number seventeen (Jarman, 1986). Jarman had a six-year hiatus in his feature film career after *The Tempest* (1979) when he continued his super-8 recording of his environment and for a living survived on well received pop-promos videos for artists such as the Pet Shop Boys and Marianne Faithful, for example, *Broken English: Three Songs by Marianne Faithfull* (1979), colour and black and white, Super- 8 and 16mm, blown up to 35mm, or, *Wide Boy Awake* (1984) for Billy Hyena, 16mm for RCA Records. This reflected the difficult situation in British film financing generally.

203 *The Horse's Mouth* cost £240,000 (Oakes, 1959); *The Rebel* £175,000, of which the largest single amount of £10,000 was George Sanders' fee, while Tony Hancock only received £5,000 and a percentage of the profits (Fisher, 2008: 311). By the time that *Love is the Devil* was made in 1998, its budget of just over £1,000,000, was considered very modest (Love is, 1997: 7).

204 Between 1981 and 1990 Channel 4, under the guidance of David Rose, funded 170 films by independent companies, usually as a co-producer to spread the costs (Giles, 1993: 74). As suggested in

came from the BFI (Pym, 1992:8).²⁰⁵ Although not Jarman's original idea²⁰⁶, a filmed life of the painter quickly became an obsession, particularly because Jarman viewed him as "the most homosexual of painters" (Jarman, 1984:22). It must be remembered that Jarman finally completed the film just weeks before being diagnosed HIV positive and his father dying. The film's intention and reception at the time was much less powerful than the resonances it has acquired since with the spread of AIDS and Jarman's subsequent barnstorming on its effects on the gay community together with the negative effects of Thatcherism. As a cultural product it now appears percipient in anticipating Jarman's battles to come.²⁰⁷

On the surface, after Jarman's death, John Maybury inherited Jarman's mantle in many ways, being a leading figure in the London based 'New Romantic' (or as originally Neuro-Romantics) Group, incorporating new media technology into punk based art,

Chapter 1.6: 95, the television station realised that it could obtain relatively cheap films for programming by providing the finance for independent filmmakers tackling more mainstream subjects, giving the films a limited art house circuit release for publicity and prestige, and then having them available very quickly, rather than wait the statutory three years before showing them on television. Potential viewers were able to read reviews of the films before watching them, rather than after having watched them (J. Walker, 1985:157). The Channel had a brief to support innovative work (O'Pray, 1996c:21). However, Jarman was not convinced this was a good thing and he publicly criticised the Channel. For example (quoted in Hacker, 1991: 254), "Channel 4 was the worst thing that happened to OUR type of independent cinema...There are sharks behind that cool veneer. They bought my films for nothing - £6000 for *Jubilee* and £12000 for *The Tempest*. It was tantamount to stealing them when the normal cost of making one hour of television drama is £250000". Similarly Jarman considered this part of a deeper malaise within the Channel: "Channel 4, in spite of a much vaunted alternative image was to turn out all Beaujolais Nouveau and scrubbed Scandinavia, pot plants in place. It wasn't OUR alternative: independent cinema was to remain independent, disenfranchised by a Channel for the slightly adventurous commuter" (Jarman, 1984:207).

205 The total cost of all 11 of Jarman's feature films was only £3.27 million (Wymer, 2005:15). The £475,000 cost of *Caravaggio* was half the budget for a three minute Duran Duran pop promo (Prendergast, 1986:27). The sales pitch to the National Film Finance Corporation in 1981 by Nicholas Ward-Jackson recalls the Hollywood pitchers in *The Player* (1992). He said, "In distributors' terms there is a good mix of hetero- and homo-sexuality, violence, art and glamour" (Wymer, 2005:93). Remember this was against a background of diminishing cinema attendances and cinemas. In 1970 there were 1,460,000 seats but by 1980 there were only 688,000 (J. Walker, 1985:6)

206 It is generally attributed to Nicholas Ward-Jackson art dealer and film producer. He originally hoped Pasolini would direct it, but on meeting Jarman, Ward-Jackson was convinced he would do as good a job (Wymer, 2005:92). Jarman had previously relied on a supportive network based firstly around James Whaley and Howard Malin and then with Dan Boyd, who had found a loophole in the tax system for writing off losses as tax.

207 Ellis (1999:288, 311) helpfully distinguishes between the 'gay period film', which he sees as "another country" invested with nostalgia, and the 'queer period film', which "speaks to the living and is activist". Jarman is a leading example of the latter and Ellis (1999:304) believes "Rather than looking to the Renaissance for a lost utopia of male desire, he uses it as a site of resistance to normative culture" and is able "to seize these moments [of joy and defeat] and to provide an alternative art of memory for this community".

which Jarman had encouraged. Maybury had worked closely with Jarman on three of his films²⁰⁸ and was also committed to maintaining a high profile for a political end in the publicising of, and gaining public acceptance for, a queer lifestyle. As both an established avant-garde video artist and at the same time, to earn a living, also a maker of very successful pop promo shorts²⁰⁹, Maybury was head-hunted by the BBC to make a film based on the life of Francis Bacon as portrayed in Dan Farson's book *The Gilded Gutter Life of Francis Bacon* (Weston, 1998: 36).²¹⁰ This resulted in a baptism of fire for Maybury's feature filmmaking owing to the antagonism felt towards the project by some senior members of the British art establishment (Caterer, 2011: 194).

Lord Gowrie, Chairman of the Arts Council made it very plain that he thought Lottery money should not be made available for the film as it was still too close to Bacon's death in 1992 (Buck, 1998: 6), even stating publicly "This film is not going to be made" (Kalin, 1998: 6). Also there was a fear that a very public airing of Bacon's sordid private life would damage the painter's reputation, reduce the value of his artworks and be embarrassing for the Arts Council who had heavily backed exhibitions of his work as the foremost British painter of the day (Mottram, 1998: 10). Maybury was used to having to 'fight his corner' and together with the BBC deliberately made a very public spectacle of getting the Arts Council Board to reconsider and to provide one half of the required funding on condition some very minor alterations were made to the screenplay (J.A. Walker, 1993: 106).

Nightwatching grew out of celebrations linked to the 400th birthday of Rembrandt in 2006. The cultural events were largely museum-based in Amsterdam, Leiden and The

208 Sets and costume design for *Jubilee* (1978), editing for *The Last of England* (1987) and parts of *War Requiem* (1988) and also directing a sequence of *War Requiem* (Del Re, 1998: 75).

209 A complete list of Maybury's 50 or so pop videos is available at <http://www.mvdbase.com/tech.php?last=Maybury&first=john> Accessed 26/05/07.

210 Despite having waited for some twenty years to cross over to feature film production, Maybury took much persuading to accept the job. He hesitated as he was uncertain that he could bring anything new to the well known facts of Bacon's life. He finally accepted when it was obvious that a straightforward biopic was unattainable owing to restrictions from Bacon's estate. He then saw it as an opportunity to work at the cutting edge of commercial cinema, covering themes dear to his own openly queer lifestyle by concentrating on the complex psycho-sexual relationship between George Dyer and Francis Bacon rather than covering Bacon's whole life (Willis, 1998:46-47).

Hague and attracted some 1.5 million visitors (Rembrandt 400, 2006: 1).²¹¹ The director Peter Greenaway had been living in Amsterdam since 1997 (Brooks, 2012: 2) and was invited to develop a special exhibition at the Rijksmuseum and chose a new way of displaying *The Nightwatch* painting (1642) using the latest technology to overlay computer graphics on the painted surface.²¹² These could not only make the figures in the painting appear to move and the location of the group within the picture seem to change from indoors to outdoors, but also from an academic point of view they permitted any part or parts of the work to be considered as separate units and cross-examined to find new meanings and significance. In doing this Greenaway believed he had found a secret message in the painting, where Rembrandt was suggesting that the militia group had conspired in the murder of one of their members. He then proceeded to develop this idea into firstly a screenplay for a biopic on Rembrandt and secondly for a documentary analysing the painting in detail. Greenaway has been able to launch his film productions relatively easily because as a successful self-promoting auteur with a ready-made market his films always make a decent return in financial terms (Hacker, 1991: 189).

Boogie Woogie is based on Danny Moynihan's bestseller of 2000 and he himself was both screenwriter and producer for the film. Moynihan trained at the Slade and then became an art dealer in both London and New York in the 80s and 90s, being friends with the 'super-artbrokers' Larry Gagosian and Jay Jopling. He seems to have known everyone, having let rooms in his Chelsea townhouse to the likes of John Malkovich, Nick Cave and Sophie Dahl, and in the 90s regularly mixing with the YBAs (Young British Artists). Literary adaptations are more usually a feature of the heritage film industry than the art-house. Backers are more readily available for material that has already proved itself in other

211 More outlandish events were a self-portrait in flowers in the Keukenhof Gardens some 33 by 46 feet using 60,000 bulbs, a specially commissioned large-scale *Rembrandt the Musical*, and an ice sculpture of *The Night Watch* created by a team of 20 Chinese artists on display at the miniature Madurodam. (www.holland.com/e/10464/Rembrandt's+400+birthday+.+events). Accessed 25/02/2011.

212 Greenaway intended the *Night Watch* to be only the first installation of Nine Classical Paintings Revisited. To date, he has followed it with da Vinci's *The Last Supper* in the Refectory of the Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan in 2008 and Paolo Veronese's *The Wedding at Cana* for the Venice Biennial in 2009. The latter involved erecting a replica of the original painting (now in the Louvre) in its original site within the Palladian architecture of the Benedictine refectory on San Giorgio Maggiore. Other works mentioned as being favoured for such treatment by Greenaway are Picasso's *Guernica*, Seurat's *Grande Jette*, Velasquez' *Las Meninás*, Michelangelo's *The Last Judgement*, a Jackson Pollock and a Claude Monet (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter-Greenaway#Recent-work Accessed 25/02/2011).

markets and would expect to have a ready-made audience from its readers. *The Bridge* (1992) is based on a 1986 novel of the same name by Maggie Hemingway which had won the Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize for regional fiction. *The Girl with a Pearl Earring* (2003) is a condensation of Tracy Chevalier's novel of 1999. Two films were based on non-fiction book sources which had sold well. In addition both purchases of the rights were used as a way of avoiding legal restrictions on use of a story by the executors of the subject's estate. *Surviving Picasso* was offered to Merchant/Ivory by Warner Bros as they had obtained the rights to Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington's *Picasso: Creator and Destroyer* (1988) which also incorporated many of the anecdotes from Gilot's *Life with Picasso* (1964).²¹³ Similarly, as already mentioned, the BBC approached John Maybury to make *Love is the Devil*, as they owned the rights to Daniel Farson's *The Gilded Gutter Life of Francis Bacon* (1993), though in practice this was to prove insufficient on its own to avoid confrontation with Bacon's estate (Kalin, 1988:61).

Chapter 4.2. The production of British artist biopics

Four of the British artist biopic films were productions shot in the confines of a film studio with virtually no location work, *Caravaggio*, *Love is the Devil*, *Girl with a Pearl Earring* and *Nightwatching*. For *Caravaggio* this effort was in the first instance to save costs. The whole film was shot indoors in a makeshift Limehouse Studios in a cold converted East End warehouse on the Isle of Dogs. It did also have the advantage of providing greater control over the finished results rather than a location shoot, especially for lighting and colour, so vital to a feel for Caravaggio's trademark chiaroscuro effects. It also allowed light and shade to provide more than mere illumination and to become an intrinsic player in the drama itself (Petrie, 1996: 119). The tones of the film were made gradually darker and darker as the narrative progressed, ranging from the bright sunlight of Rome's streets when Caravaggio is a young man, to the totally black background of his lying awaiting burial (Beristain, 2007).²¹⁴ Jarman and Christopher Hobbs, the production

213 The production team were very careful not to use any direct quotations from Gilot in order to avoid copyright battles (Ivory, 2005: 281, 284).

214 To keep within budget the grand Vatican apartments had to be simply suggested, for example by flooding the warehouse floor so that in reflected light the floors looked like marble. Jarman's own

designer, made several trips to Italy while the project was in gestation, not only to imbibe the atmosphere, but also to seek locations. In the end they decided to use the cheap option of a London studio with sound effects recorded in Italy, often at places where the depicted events had occurred such as the sound of the sea at Porto Ecole. This gave an added layer of authenticity and timelessness to the studio created images. With *Caravaggio* the BFI insisted that their part of the funding deal was only 'on' if the production was made in 35mm. Up to then Jarman had been using 16mm, 8mm and super-8 film and playing with the grain and colour by filming its projection. He now had to be more disciplined and have as much as possible pre-planned to take advantage of the cost reductions via a tight shoot.²¹⁵ Jarman certainly had a script after sixteen rewrites, but this time he needed to stick more closely to it to ensure completion of the film within the allocated six weeks. He also used a cast of professional rather than amateur actors.

Similar forces were at play in making the much bigger budget *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. Location seekers failed to find an area of accessible canals in the Netherlands which had a period ambiance. The producer then heard of an abandoned film set complete with a stretch of canal. Filming was confined to this large set and gradually narrowed down more and more to simply the Vermeer family home and courtyard. This not only provided the required claustrophobic household atmosphere, it, as for Jarman, also permitted the tight control of lighting effects required to suggest the likeness of a Vermeer painting.

Many films had continuing troubles during production. For example, on *Love is the Devil*, after having to fight hard for funding, John Maybury was told by Bacon's estate that he could not reproduce any of Bacon's artworks, nor use any direct quotations from interviews (Kalin, 1998: 61 and Alberge, 1997). The irony was that Maybury's script felt so authentic that opponents of the film thought he had used quotations from Bacon's

apartment furnished many of the props glimpsed in Cardinal Del Monte's art collection. A white sheet, as if the collection was literally under wraps, covered the rest.

215 In contrast, Jack Hazan (2004: 1) was only interested in using 35mm for *A Bigger Splash* as he always saw the work as meant for cinema projection rather than languishing in a television slot. Similarly, Maybury wanted to break out of video based work which by now had become a sort of prison for his talents, and progress into what he saw as a more challenging and more rewarding area of feature film production (Kirby, 1991: 22).

interviews with David Sylvester, but the script used dialogue written by Maybury with content loosely suggested by anecdotes from Bacon's friends, especially Daniel Farson. Maybury was forced to rethink his approach to the reproduction of Bacon's paintings on screen. He decided to proceed with a different emphasis within the film, away from using Bacon's lover George Dyer as his muse and the depiction of Bacon's creativity to a psychological study of the seven-year relationship (Del Re, 1998: 77). Bacon becomes the creator of the *mise-en-scene* of the production as the colour and mood of Bacon's paintings are conveyed by the use of filters and distorted lenses (Buck, 1998: 6 and Willis, 1998: 50). Where possible Maybury used cheap effects to keep within his budget, such as copying the photographer John Deakin's style of shooting up at people, which gave an innovative unflattering quality (Willis, 1998: 48).

There was a six and a half week shooting schedule and Maybury's experience in pop promos allowed him to work with speed and efficiency and keep to schedule. He denies being influenced by the pop video style. Maybury was able to gather some known colleagues around himself, such as his producer of pop promos and advertisements for the last five years, Chiara Menage (*Love is...*, 1997:7) and his designer, Alan Macdonald, whom he had first met when working with Jarman (Willis, 1998:47). Maybury, again like Jarman, opted for an enclosed studio based production on the grounds of both reducing costs and providing close control over the image, which in this case were to include some special computer generated effects. Such effects were relatively expensive and further reduced the budget for other aspects of the production, although some costs were reduced because of Maybury's personal expertise and connections in this field²¹⁶. Small, enclosed boxlike sets predominated, though all were extremely flexible so all sides could be moved or removed as required for particular camera angles and effects.²¹⁷

Chapter 4.3. The reception of British artist biopics

216 As with his earlier work, such as *Remembrance of Things Past*, where Maybury explained "Because of my previous work in promos I was able to go to post-production facilities and say 'I can give you ten grand but I need a hundred hours' when ten grand would normally buy me five to ten hours" (Smith, 2000:147).

217 The budget only allowed for 2000 feet of film per day to be used, which gave little allowance for whether the special effects created with the camera were working as this was not known until each day's film was developed and the subsequent rushes viewed (Willis, 1998:51).

On their release, both *The Horse's Mouth* and *The Rebel* provoked considerable debate not only about their own merits but also on the whole topic of the acceptability of modern art. *The Horse's Mouth* was attacked by John Berger (1959) in an extended article in *The Observer*, for mistakenly continuing to promote the incorrect myth that the artist of genius must be a wild outsider divorced from the everyday social community. Rather, in Marxist terms the artist should be an inclusive part of society, expressing the changes in society from within the social environment, not outside it. Many readers wrote in to suggest this was nonsense, that in order for the artist to induce change in approaches to their work they must be at the cutting edge of ideas and therefore in advance of the consensus in society generally. If the artist were integrated as far as Berger suggests there would be no artistic development and art would remain unchanging.²¹⁸ For the individual artist creating the paintings within the film, John Bratby, his contribution was a great success and led to a timely revival of interest in his work, just at the time abstract paintings had begun to outperform representational work in the marketplace. However, Bratby was aghast that it was often assumed that Gulley Jimson was his alter-ego as he was against any morally reprehensible behaviour (Yacower, 2008: 70). As a riposte, in 1960 he wrote the first of a trilogy of books about painters, *Breakdown*, where the corrupt more than get their just desserts. The series was a critical success and Bratby benefited from a large advance, even if not high royalties from sales.

The Rebel was considered the best debut film of any British television comedy artist (Hancock, 1996: 99). The film aroused a debate in the press about the value of modern art in general.²¹⁹ Some saw it as an intelligent comic ridicule of the worst excesses of modern art while others disliked it on the grounds that it pandered to the worst of middle-class values, comfortably confirming their basic fears of modern art. All the artworks for the film were provided by the painter and printmaker Alistair Grant.²²⁰

218 See the BFI Library Press Cuttings Collection on *The Horse's Mouth*.

219 Clancey Sigel, writing in *Time and Tide*, 23 March 1961, believed the film to be "deeply philistine, cheap and anti-art. How easy it is to solicit our contempt for modern art... *The Rebel* is a regular lynch party". Compare this to Alan Dent in *The Sunday Telegraph*, 5th March 1961, who thought it "a highly intelligent farce, and its intelligence (as happened with *The Horse's Mouth*) may easily prove its undoing"

220 They aroused no interest at the time, unlike Bratby's in *The Horse's Mouth*. It was not till sixty years later that interest in them was revived, but then only as part of a performance art, not in respect of

The ideas expressed in the two fictional comedies of the late 1950s were taken as seriously as those propounded in the serious biopics because the character of the fictional artists was so well drawn. Ronald Neame was a great admirer of the way Alec Guinness could don a completely different persona for each role (Neame, 2002). Tony Hancock had spent years perfecting his character on radio and television, always retaining traces of his own personality as a core. He had the added advantage of working in tandem with the scriptwriters, Galton and Simpson, who were also utterly familiar with his studio character.

Caravaggio, while having some enthusiastic supporters, such as Colin McCabe who helped to produce it, was not universally admired, perhaps as too much had been expected of it after all the publicity concerning its long gestation²²¹. However, it was to hang on the coattails of Jarman's wider renown once he started his anti-AIDS agit-prop and was regarded as a greater vessel of propaganda on behalf of gay pride and liberation than it really contains. In the light of this it has been recognised as a key or defining film in Jarman's output as it is so self-referential. Its academic reputation has gained even greater ground with the 2007 release of a remastered DVD by the BFI, densely packed with extras.

For *Love is the Devil*, the row with Lord Gowrie and the Arts Council over its funding provided extensive free publicity. It received the very attention on its release that Gowrie had been anxious to avoid. The London critics on the one hand ranged from being appalled at its content to finding it equally deficient as a work of art, while another camp praised the film as one of the best artist biopics.²²² Alexander Walker (1998: 47), film critic of the *Evening Standard*, pursued what Maybury considered a vendetta against the film (Kalin, 1998: 62), using every opportunity to decry the use of public money to fund a

the worth of the product itself. The London Institute of Pataphysics (2002: 1) recreated the 'lost' works of Anthony Aloysius St. John Hancock in September 2002 with the intention of raising the question of how the recreated works of art "might be regarded had they come from the brush or pen of Dali, Picasso or Van Gogh".

221 The film won a Silver Bear for Gabriel Beristain's cinematography at the Berlin Film Festival.
222 E.g. the 'anti' Tookey (1998: 44) to the 'pro' Williams (1998: 8).

film he considered loathsome and corrupting. Many decried the absence of reproductions of Bacon's work in the film, seemingly unaware of the embargoes that had faced the filmmakers. Those who were aware were impressed by Maybury's attempts to infiltrate the whole film with Bacon's style and colours. However, overall, the film was seen as a glimpse into Bacon's seedy private life rather than an exploration of his genius and did not seem to affect his artistic reputation in the way his friends, who had tried to stop the film, had feared.

Where *A Bigger Splash* was convincing simply because Hazan had use of real life protagonists, Maybury had to use additional means. His actors were convincing look-alikes. Maybury claims "I wanted to create atmosphere, not historical detail" (DVD: Production Notes). For example, in the Colony Club sequences the groups of drinkers are in fact sprinkled with the up and coming young artists of the 1990s, to provide a similar edgy ambience to that of the original club. This attempt at reproduction of environment and ambience rather than architecture is continued throughout the film, for example with St John standing in for the fish restaurant Wheeler's. Maybury could work on this principle as he could draw in favours from his wide network of contacts throughout the contemporary art and fashion scenes.²²³ Maybury is drawing a distinct parallel between the artist's social lives of the 1960s with that of London in the 1990's, though this would probably go unnoticed by a general audience. This was felt to emphasise the continuity of the culture, as a similar clientele was still keeping the establishments alive, as well as giving a feel of authenticity to the artistic milieu of the film (*Love is...*, 1998). However, there is a difference between the two decades in that the 1960s gayness and camp style is replaced in the 1990s by a hetero tone and the more puritanical and materialist nature of the Britpack (Shone, 1998:138). Even so the fetid, squabbling, vicious atmosphere of the Colony Room is deftly captured (O'Pray, 1998:48).²²⁴

223 On film we have Young British Artists like Sarah Lucas and Gary Hume (as Volker Dix) and contemporary fashion designers such as Stella McCartney and Paul Smith and also Tracy Emin and Gillian Wearing in a Brighton pub.

224 Maybury believes "it is not really that different [today]. Shocking how similar it is – the only difference now is that it is Damien Hirst and Tracey Emin instead of Francis Bacon and whoever, but it is still the same space" (Kalin, 1998:65). The Colony Room lease ran out in 2008.

Such care for authenticity is also manifested in *Boogie Woogie*, where again, the Director has been able to call on personal contacts in the British art scene to release material for filming that would not normally be considered available for filming. The film also provides a grand summary display of the work of the most prominent British artists of the last few years. While Damien Hirst's friendship with Moynihan may have tempered the film's satire to some extent, it did provide an immediate entrée to the work of a generation. One of Hirst's own original spin pictures is given pride of place in Spindle's, the art gallery owner's, office and duly praised as a masterwork. All the other works included in the film have been recreated with the artist's permission in order to save on inhibitive insurance costs.²²⁵ The pictures shown were chosen to directly reflect the context of the particular scene in which they feature. For example, the neon by Tracey Emin, *Trust Me*, sits on the wall immediately behind Art Spindle, an ironic comment as he begins to weave his web of deceit. The Mondrian in a diamond frame at the centre of the plot was created for the film with the consent of the artist's estate, but was burnt afterwards at their behest.

Chapter 4.4. Derek Jarman and Peter Greenaway

One important issue that must be considered is the place of the directors Derek Jarman and Peter Greenaway within the British artist biopic. Often considered to be quintessentially British filmmakers and the foremost avant-garde directors to emerge in the 1980s, so much has been written about them that it would be easy to set their contribution as out of all proportion to their influence within the genre.

Derek Jarman and Peter Greenaway were the leading *auteurs* of the next generation of avant-garde directors after the 1970s. Often regarded as filmmakers from different ends of a spectrum, a situation reinforced by their very public dislike of both each other and the other's work, when their work is analysed, commentators such as Wollen (1993: 248-255) or Orr (2000: 329-330) have been surprised how much they have in common. Both have directed an artist biopic, Jarman's *Caravaggio* in 1986 and

225 There are works by the Chapmans, Banksy, Tracey Emin, Gavin Turk, Sam Taylor-Wood, Sarah Lucas, Jenny Saville, Robert Gordon McHarg III, Mat Collishaw, Rachel Howard and Bruce Nauman.

Greenaway's *Rembrandt* in 2006, and it will be seen how much of their regular preoccupations are reflected in these, in particular how each one's unique vision of Britishness is portrayed.

Both directors trained as painters at art school and remained gallery artists alongside their film careers. Each was making very personal films with a very individual style and a lesser interest in narrative, while each looked to the past for inspiration and saw themselves as the direct descendant of a British tradition in both their films and paintings. As Wollen (1993: 249) has summarised,

"Both...can also be seen as neoromantics, steeped in a personal vision of the English landscape, endlessly revisiting and rejecting the temptations of Victorianism and antiquarianism, returning much more willingly to their memories of childhood, mediated through home movies and family snapshots for Jarman, and through pored-over children's book illustrations for Greenaway".

For Jarman this was a relish for the England of the first Elizabeth, with leanings towards magic as exemplified by the importance of alchemy and the magician John Dee, promoting a cultural landscape which led from Shakespeare through to Blake, Ruskin and Larkin. These influences were already set at art school where he chose to follow the archaic form of landscape painting in the tradition of Blake, Samuel Palmer, Turner and Constable rather than the modernism of Pop Art (Driscoll, 1996, 65, 68). Of his eleven feature films, six in some way deal with aspects of the art and history of what he saw as the Arcadia. Wymer (2005: 5) concludes that to Jarman "Elizabethan England was 'our cultural Arcadia', the source of 'a dream of England' against which he contrasted the horrors of an industrialised, globalised, Americanised modernity."²²⁶ Jarman saw this historical material as still being of relevance to the modern world and this link is manifested in a frequent use of what Orr (2000:331) dubs 'politicising anachronism', and results in what Wollen (1993: 251) describes as 'inauthentic modernity', whereby history

226 Such feelings led Jarman to openly deride David Hockney for promoting all things American, despite Jarman having been part of the Hockney/Procktor entourage while at art school (Jarman, 1984: 62; O'Pray, 1996b: 42-46). It also pervaded Jarman's use of locations, where he had a particular love of Dorset and the Isle of Purbeck, an area associated with magic and ley lines, for instance the cliffs at Winspit are used in both *Jubilee* and *The Angelic Conversation*. Other locations rooted in English history include Stoneleigh Abbey in *The Tempest* and Montacute House also in *The Angelic Conversation* (Driscoll, 1996: 75).

is recuperated for use in the present. For example, in *Caravaggio*, art critic Baglione uses a twentieth century typewriter to write his review of Caravaggio's latest show. An everyday artefact from European history is transferred to Renaissance Italy. In addition to this anachronism, the screen image is a pastiche of David's *The Death of Marat* (1793), which was in turn originally an example of neo-classicism quoting from classical art. The effect for the audience is firstly to collapse the intervening centuries from the seventeenth to the present day, the image being a palimpsest providing glimpses of the image evolving over the years, with each variation having its own meaning (Richardson, 2009: 153-154). At the same time there is an aggressive shock effect as the audience is transferred from the the distant past where it feels relatively safe, straight to the immediate present, which is clearly discomforting (Orr, 2000: 332).

Greenaway is fascinated by a later, seventeenth-century, period with the rise in the use of modular and serial structures, whether they be lists, catalogues, counting games or the solving of mysteries. He also claims his modernity by rejecting a straightforward antiquarianism, this time by the use of exaggeration, with an "excess in the language, excess in the landscape...there is no historical realism in the costumes...I wanted to make a very artificial film" (quoted in Wollen, 1993: 251 on the making of *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982)). The contradictions in his work can be accounted for by Greenaway's own analysis of his heritage, that "I am Welsh by birth, English by education, and European by nature."²²⁷ Bearing in mind the funding problems of both directors, for Jarman there was little alternative to being spare and minimalist, while for Greenaway his compositions are ornate and baroque (Orr, 2000: 329). For both men there is a compulsion to provoke and shock. Where they do differ in approach is that Jarman's films are dominated by their images, as if he felt awkward in dealing with words, unless using a pre-existing literary text, whereas Greenaway's films show a fascination with words and tend to be overloaded with dialogue (Wollen, 1993: 248-249).

227 Greenaway also stated, "I think my films are very English. That certain emotional distance, interest in the world, interest in irony. These are all deeply English propositions" Both quotations included in a collection of quotes by Greenaway at, <http://petergreenaway.org.uk/quotes.htm>. Accessed 26/07/11.

The close attention, and background research both director's pay to the paintings in their respective artist biopics result in both of them finding hidden meaning, providing a personal agenda in the way they are shown and introduced. While Jarman projects a homage to a gay criminal Greenaway discovers a painter who is a detective, unearthing a murder mystery and calling the public's attention to the culprits. Both concepts are extremely personal interpretations, not generally accepted by art historians and critics. They reflect the director's obsessions. Jarman said in 1984, before his film was funded, "*Caravaggio* is about a gay man, an artist, a murderer – not a victim. A rather unpleasant man" (quoted in Finch, 1986:100). The film perfectly captures this ambivalence, but ends up on the sympathetic side. Jarman had a long standing agenda of identifying gay artists from history whose sexuality had been deliberately kept discrete by the establishment. He took the existence of works showing young naked male bodies in provocative poses as sufficient evidence that Caravaggio was gay. The brushes of Caravaggio with the law also endorsed the gay tropes of the allure of the criminal and rough trade (Richardson, 2005: 42).²²⁸ For Greenaway his obsession with form and listing was exhibited in the more than thirty points he found within *The Night Watch* painting which provided the evidence for his conspiracy theory, which in turn was to explain the decline in Rembrandt's fortunes after 1642 (Dargis, 2009: 1) (see also Chapter 7.3). Greenaway saw *Nightwatching* as inaugurating a series of films exploring the life and works of the Golden Age of Dutch painting, as he thinks there is a closer relationship between artist and the common viewer at this period.

Chapter 4.5. The dark side of the British artist biopic: a hidden dose of *duende*

Having considered the origin, production and reception of the British artist bio-pic, the remainder of this chapter will look at the representation of the artist across these production categories and will suggest there is a common feature which does have a uniquely British response. Looking at British film production as a whole the series of films by Richard Curtis have not only been successful in financial terms, but have also promoted a positive view of the country and encouraged tourism from overseas by

²²⁸ On this topic see Chapter 5.2.

deliberately exploiting traditional British stereotypes.²²⁹ Higson, (2011: 72) suggests that Curtis's emphasis on the upbeat has left room for the remainder of the field to exhume the darker, nastier, grittier side to the British way of life. Within the biopic genre as a whole there has been a keen interest, and good box-office returns, in the most headline making and unsavoury characters, as in *Scandal* (Michael Caton-Jones, 1989) about Christine Keeler, *The Krays* (Peter Medak, 1990) or *Dance With a Stranger* (Mike Newell, 1985) on Ruth Ellis. These "dubious heroes and heroines" such as John Christie (*Ten Rillington Place*, Richard Fleischer, 1971), Joe Orton (*Prick Up Your Ears*, Stephen Frears, 1987) or Sid Vicious (*Sid and Nancy*, Alex Cox, 1986) have even been declared by Orr (2000: 328) to be "vaguely satanic through [their] notoriety".²³⁰ For the artist biopic this pre-occupation with the darker side of the artistic psyche goes beyond the general myth making of the flawed personality of the artist genius prevalent across transnational boundaries, especially in regard to the portrayal of British artists. It becomes a deep-seated, almost pathological, fixation within British output, even surfacing within what at first seem the most light-hearted of films, and giving a most disturbing undertow to the genre. Great art appears only to co-exist alongside an ugliness in human nature that taints any masterpieces, leaving the artist as a most unsavoury, and therefore also unlikely, representative of British culture.²³¹

However, there is, as one might expect, a change in tone over the seventy-five year span of these films. As the tight censorship of sex and violence has gradually been loosened and a more liberated regime established, so the makers of artist biopics have taken advantage of the situation to depict a 'warts and all' approach to their subject. To some extent this approach has been cumulative, so, for example, the frank depiction of the gay scene in *A Bigger Splash* would not have been possible without the prior acceptance of full frontal nudity, both male and female, in a heterosexual setting within

229 The money-spinners were *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994), *Bean* (1997), *Notting Hill* (1999), *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001), *Love Actually* (2003) and *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* (2004).

230 In this context the heritage film can be taken as its opposite, suggesting an angelic aspect based on the literary pedigree of the source adaptations (Orr, 2000: 328).

231 The basic argument in this section was first put forward in relation to films limited to depicting post World War Two British artists, at the conference, *Artistic Strategies in the United Kingdom, 1945-2010*, organised by the association One Piece at a Time and the Université Paris X at the Institut national d'histoire de l'art in Paris on the 19th of June 2009, and subsequently published as Bovey (2010), and included as a publication on pages 357-361 of the thesis.

Ken Russell's *Women in Love* (1969). To some extent the character of the artist worsens in each successive film, though there remain some strict boundaries of behaviour that cannot be shown. As Maybury has said about *Love is the Devil*, (Buck, 1998: 6):

"I was shocked by the response I got from the cultural gatekeepers. Bacon himself was always completely open about his sexual practices and, anyway, it's all up there in the canvases – they go much further than I ever could; my film is tame in comparison. If I'd included all the dirt that I really got on Francis Bacon and his private life, then the film would have been unshowable".

By 2009, with *Boogie Woogie*, the whole art scene is portrayed as amoral, corrupt and driven by sexual philandering. The art works on show reflect a public display of wealth and purchase of them provides entrée into an elite social group with a hedonistic agenda. In 1958 Gulley Jimson in *The Horse's Mouth* can even in the most favourable terms be described as nothing less than 'unruly'; while Hancock in *The Rebel* (1961) is certainly devious; but by the time of the David Hockney and Francis Bacon biopics a greater degree of frankness about the artists' private life has arrived: in these examples there is a common openness about them being queer. Their sexual orientation becomes the most potent symbol of their 'otherness' and is given greater emphasis within the film portrait than their creative work. In fact four of the artists whose lives are depicted are gay and Dora Carrington is bisexual. The fact that this is unremarked and just taken as accepted within three of the films (*A Bigger Splash*, *Caravaggio*, *Love is the Devil*) is as important as the explicitness of the visual portrayal of the relationships. Each artist is shown in a milieu where their sexuality is self-evident although, its explicit depiction may not necessarily be acceptable to the viewer of the film. That the sexual politics is simply taken as read is in itself a political statement. The films are certainly based around the examination of a sexual relationship, in three cases around a homosexual love affair, where the muse is male. This emphasis in turn perforce limits the period of life of the artist to be portrayed, giving three years for David Hockney, nine for Francis Bacon, an emphasis only on the years in Rome for Caravaggio, with nothing the period of exile in Naples, Sicily and Malta, and three years for the main part of *Little Ashes*, when Dali, Lorca and Bunuel were together at university in Madrid. For directors Jarman and Maybury there is a case for placing their films within the longer tradition of queer cinema,

particularly linking the portrayal of Bacon and Caravaggio to the work of Genet, Cocteau and Anger in both the glamorisation of the criminal and the artist being seen very much as an outsider in society (Richardson, 2009: 47-80; Gardner, 1996: 32). In the studies of Dali and Carrington there is a distinct ambiguity about their sexuality, which provides an additional reason for their increasingly erratic behaviour.²³²

The seeds of such a pattern are visible from the first British artist biopic in the 1936 *Rembrandt*. Even though the reprehensible acts of the artist had been watered down by Korda in the final script (see Ch. 2.1. pp.15-16) enough remain to present a very unsympathetic central character, with few redeeming features. His pig-headedness and irascibility resulted in very small audiences for the film despite critical success. The single-mindedness of his fixation to paint at the expense of all those around him suggests more than the familiar behaviour of the artist to his loved ones. In *Montparnasse 19* (1958), for example, even the misogyny of Modigliani is compensated by the immediate regret and making-up with his mistresses, whereas *Rembrandt* just ignores them and all his obligations. However, within this group of films with a decidedly problematic and negative representation of the modern British artist, a first analysis of their tone is to be conducted on the two comedies that appeared in close timing to each other at the end of the 1950s as they to a large extent seem at first sight to be unlikely candidates for such caustic portrayals.

As for the contents of each film, it is interesting to consider why they are so negative. For *The Horse's Mouth* the original concept by author Joyce Carey about a reprobate painter was even bleaker than in Guinness's screenplay. However, the film still opens with Gulley Jimson's release from Wormwood Scrubs prison after serving a sentence for extortion with menaces. The loosely strung plot sees Jimson obsessed with painting large-scale works of genius on any large available wall, but without regard to person or property. He thieves and pawns other people's goods to finance his painting materials, and absolutely wrecks a luxury flat, which he has no right to be in anyway. He is not even a loveable rogue as his dealings make him a darker figure than this,

232 Questions of gender in the artist biopic generally are discussed more fully in Chapters 5 and 6.

compounded by Guinness's performance (Christie, 2002: 2). Guinness usually found his performing character by discovering their walk. For Jimson, Guinness also found a voice – a classless rasp which forbids intimacy. The artistic side of the character is given authenticity by the use of John Bratby as the artist for Jimson's work. Here Bratby's 'kitchen sink' style matches the downbeat and essentially domestic nature of Jimson's environment.²³³ The film also aimed at authentic use of sets for the sequences in art collector's interiors by the use of, what was then, the considerable sum of £100, 000 worth of genuine antiques and master paintings, including Renoir's *Baigneuse sur des Rochers* (Knightsbridge, 1958).

In *The Rebel* Hancock's character finds social success in Paris on the art circuit by self-confidence, bluff and mistakes in language translation and launches new artistic movements of "Infantilism" and "Shapeism" (London, 2002: 1).²³⁴ There is a gentle mockery of the avant-garde scene, with particular demolition of surrealism and existentialism. However, it is when his friend, Paul Ashby, returns to London that fate takes a dark turn and Hancock is mistakenly attributed the hand of Paul's work, and finds it easier to go along with this subterfuge than to forcibly deny it. Hancock becomes world renowned and rich from this cheating but finds it harder and harder to sustain the fraud as more works of genius are required and Paul's new output is not available to him. Hancock does put things right in the last few minutes of the film and does end up with some form of punishment in having to return to the attentions of his landlady Mrs Crevatte, played by actress Irene Handl, who specialised in portraying working-class harridans.

Similar traits in the artist's depiction can also be seen in the collection of heritage films within the British artist biopics. In fact, by the time the first British artist biopic occurs within this genre, in late 1992, we are already very nearly into what has been

233 Sir Kenneth Clark was consulted by Neame and he unhesitatingly said "There is only one man alive today who can give you what you want, and that's John Bratby" (Neame, 2003: 161). The paintings have the feel of definite promise if not outright genius. Use of Bratby gave the film much publicity (Yacower 2008: 67).

234 Hancock critique's his friend Paul's paintings. Tony: Well, look. You see your colours are the wrong shape. Paul: I don't understand. Tony: Look, the colours shouldn't end where the shapes end, they should send out a glow in the air. (Galton, 1961: 57).

dubbed 'post-heritage' by Claire Monk (1995: 33), where the balance of "innate escapism, and their promotion of a conservative, bourgeois, 'English' national identity" and period spectacle is altered by the addition of "the explicit preoccupation with 'unconventional' sexualities – gay, bisexual and active female heterosexual", as exemplified in *Carrington*. Here the artist Dora rejects her female first name, wears male clothes and has a series of young male lovers while remaining in love with the homosexual Lytton Strachey. She commits suicide shortly after Strachey's death.²³⁵ Although Monk dates 'post-heritage' to 1993 and the appearance of *Orlando* (directed by Sally Potter), *The Bridge* (released in 1992, but actually made in 1990) already shows many of the new characteristics in embryo.²³⁶ At the same time *The Bridge* pays its dues to the staples of the heritage film with a setting in Victorian/Edwardian rural England; a love affair with deep conflict between passion and reason and bohemia against respectability; a number of suffering lower orders who are kept apart from the upper orders; luminous photography; a cast of character actors; a bittersweet ending²³⁷

The film offers an imaginary explanation for why the British impressionist painter Philip Wilson Steer (played by David O'Hara) changed his painting style, abruptly and without warning in mid-1897 while on his annual painting trip to Walberswick, Suffolk. The screenplay, based on a novel by Maggie Hemingway, invokes the repercussions of a social and sexual transgression by the painter as the primary cause.²³⁸ In the single

²³⁵ Fuller reference to this film is made in Chapter 4.

²³⁶ The film was Syd Macartney's debut as a director. He had made some very successful commercials, for example those for Levi 501's and Moosehead Lager, which shows in the frequent use of soft-focus photography and slow-motion close-up, particularly of Saskia Reeves. Tookey (1992) dubbed all of this the "Laura Ashley school of filmmaking", for a mise-en-scène containing a plethora of white parasols and pretty children in prints.

²³⁷ Within Irish film, Neeley (2005: 53) suggests that *My Left Foot* (1989), the story of severely disabled artist Christy Brown, be included in yet another sub-division of the heritage film. Powrie (2000: 316) proposes a category of 'alternative heritage' films originating from the Celtic Fringe. These are typically 'rites of passage' films in which a child (usually a boy) tells the story. The very fact of assuming the child's point-of-view, because a child is vulnerable, makes life seem less secure. Unlike the English heritage film, the Irish is not comforting as it is not set in a sealed nostalgic world, but one where the past is ever present. The detail of the settings and a quest for 'authenticity' remain, equally as in the bourgeois heritage film, but in the Celtic it is reserved for presenting a working-class background. Neeley (2005: 50) lists other films in this category as *The Butcher Boy* (Neil Jordan, 1997), *Venus Peter* (Ian Sellar, 1990), *Dreaming* (Mike Alexander, 1990), and *Angela's Ashes* (Alan Parker, 1999).

²³⁸ Maggie Hemingway's intuitive explanation proved to be on the right lines as just before the film's premiere the previously unknown heirs of Steer's illegitimate children came forward and corroborated that this 'family' was indeed in crisis around the time *The Bridge* was painted (Birkett, 1992).

summer he falls in love with a married woman, Isobel Hetherington (played by Saskia Reeves) and consummates the relationship, but loses all as their clandestine meeting is revealed. There is a double loss of innocence as not only are the lovers stigmatised but also the tragedy is unleashed by the babblings of the youngest child (Emma) while she is in a state of shock after an accidental fall from 'the bridge' of the film's title and Steer's painting.²³⁹ The painter begins the film as the epitome of a Victorian gentleman, proffering friendship mixed with exoticism and a magical talent to the holidaying children and a welcome new face for social occasions to the adults of the visiting household. It is very much a mood piece, with sparse dialogue. The beauty and stultifying heat of a perfect summer on the beach are well conveyed. It is a hothouse atmosphere in both senses. The evil lurking behind the outward calm and respectability is only slowly revealed. The atmosphere is also heavily charged by the nearness of death even in so lovely a setting. A local fishing boat is lost in a sudden storm and a body is washed up on the shore. Steer is shown as so absorbed in recording the scene, and subsequently chasing after the dead man's mother to record her grief in a portrait, that he is entirely insensitive to that grief and perhaps the whole plight of the lower social orders in general. He says to Isobel, without a trace of irony, "What a privilege to be there – to see life stripped down to its essentials" (quoted in Francke, 1992: 41). It was "a great stroke of luck for an artist". However, Steer is acutely embarrassed when Mrs Todd merely asks him while he is sketching if he would help pursue enquiries along the coast about her husband who is still missing.²⁴⁰

The character of Steer is drawn more demonically in the film than in the novel, particularly as in the book, the aunt, who acts as chaperone in residence, is able to prevent Isobel meeting Steer alone. In the film he emerges as the archetypal cad. He is unable to resist the bribe of one hundred guineas for Isabel's portrait paid by her husband, Reginald, and is completely outmanoeuvred by Reginald once the illicit affair is

239 The bridge both symbolically links and separates as it marks the boundary between the outer world and the self-contained settlement around the beach on the opposite side of the estuary.

240 At this slight hint of implied obligation Steer begins to hurriedly collect up his belongings and cannot wait to get out of the door, and he seems terrified when Mrs Todd actually touches him while imploring for help, and he quickly prises her fingers off his arm so he can make a quick get-away. Mrs Todd ultimately commits suicide when her husband's corpse does appear. Her body is discovered by Emma as she falls off the bridge.

exposed, placing the promise of patronage, as well as avoiding scandal and disgrace, over his love for Isobel. At the end of the film he fails to have the courage to fight in any way for her love and leaves her to the tender mercies of a loveless marriage, simply sinking into a whimpering heap hidden behind the parapet as Reginald catches up with a distraught Isobel on the bridge below. This cowardly withdrawal is in strong contrast to the undying love felt by Mrs Todd.²⁴¹ This is a depth of feeling of which Steer seems incapable, still clinging to the belief when Mrs Todd's body is found that "People don't die for love!" His ultimate involvement with Isobel proves to be shallow despite his pining over her absence when in France, while her passion becomes all-absorbing, contemplating deserting her husband, children and place in society to stay with him.

A strong moral cowardice also lies at the heart of *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, which also imagines the story behind the painting of the title, and, again like *The Bridge*, is based on a popular novel. However, *Girl with a Pearl Earring* is much more closely involved with the means of creating great art, using the introduction of the servant girl, Griet, into the household of Johannes Vermeer to explore the arrangements and techniques of a seventeenth century Dutch artist as well as the dynamics of his household.²⁴² The long delayed appearance of Vermeer himself not only provides suspense but also imposes a feeling of great authenticity to the depiction of the daily life of the entire family as it provides space for all the characters to be introduced in detail first and a household routine to be established. The subtle delineation of the full extent that the lives of so many people hang on the artistic output of the one, very slow, painter, places the question of the value and importance of art on an equal footing to the private life of the artist and the strong bond, and latent sexual attraction, between artist and

241 When her husband's body is found she says, "It should have been me that drowned. I have no life without him".

242 On the DVD commentary, the director, Peter Webber, describes how the original three and a half hours running time for the film was gradually edited down to ninety minutes. All the wider historical references and action was eliminated until only events in the Vermeer household and its immediate vicinity were left, with a focus on the development of the personal relationship between Griet and the painter, taking place largely within the confines of his studio. While there is only one brief moment of watching Vermeer actually brush paint onto a canvas, his works are on show in the studio and in the study of his patron. Otherwise, the director and his cinematographer, Eduardo Serra, collaborated on suggesting the styles of many Dutch artists by the grouping of characters and the play of light, taken from paintings of the period. This was a general inspiration to achieve painterly effects rather than trying to reproduce living tableaux of particular works.

servant/model. At the climax to the film, as the title painting is completed and Vermeer's wife acts against the threat that Griet represents to her marriage, Vermeer himself stays silent. In the same way his portrait painting and sublimated lovemaking have been carried out furtively in secret, so he stays mute and fails to defend Griet in any way. He takes the easy way out, in letting her be instantly dismissed. The feeling of a bad taste in this form of inaction is compounded by the film's epilogue, which can be taken to suggest that Vermeer can erase his guilt by, and Griet can be bought off by, the gift of his wife's pearl earrings that had been used in Griet's portrait. Vermeer's failings are not unexpected as he has been shown as a man of few words in a family of strong women, but still retaining the privilege of acting completely selfishly when any matters relating to his art are involved. He has also been shown as a rather spooky voyeur, lurking in and coming out of the shadows in a homage to the appearance of a Nosferatu.

A strong case of misogyny also underlies the portrait of a foreign artist in *Surviving Picasso* (1996). A seventeen million dollar budget provides some spectacle, notably in the German occupation of and relief of Paris, but basically this is another small-scale chamber piece exploring the artist's relationship to his women, centring on his years with Françoise Gilot, using material taken from her autobiography.²⁴³ Gilot, played by Natascha McElhone, provides regular voiceovers which ease the time transitions as the narrative moves backwards and forwards. They also provide basic information on Picasso's type of work and styles over the period they were together. So the audience is informed of the basic fact that Picasso's relationships were important as each woman brought a new subject for him to paint and with this new inspiration an associated change in artistic style, a new residence and a new group of friends. The changes from Marie Thérèse Walter to Dora Maar and then Gilot are emphasised, together with his willingness to experiment with artistic form, particularly in his move into ceramics associated with Gilot and Jacqueline Roque.

243 Strictly speaking Warner Brothers only had the rights to Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington's *Picasso: Creator and Destroyer* (1988) but this incorporated many of the anecdotes from Gilot's *Life with Picasso* (1964). The production team were very careful not to use any direct quotations from Gilot in order to avoid copyright battles (Ivory, 2005: 281, 284). When they first met Gilot was 21 and Picasso 61 (Hearty, 1996:112).

The film concentrates on the psychological dual between Picasso and Gilot as he appears determined to break her strong will. She had already stood up to and suffered both physical and mental abuse from her father. Picasso in turn secretes her in isolated establishments. He is forty years older than her. It takes her ten years and the death of her protective grandmother to enable her to break out of what is often depicted as a prison without bars. What the film does not say is that in one sense she was the lucky concubine as all Picasso's other long-term relationships ended in a supreme tragedy.²⁴⁴ Jhabvala's script brings out the dark side of Picasso's character and he becomes a sacred monster.²⁴⁵ It shows this in some very powerful scenes, much more hard-hitting than in the usual Merchant Ivory film. For example, the couple's battle of wills is mirrored in the act of Picasso firstly physically holding Françoise's whole body down and then secondly grabbing her head and neck forcing her to watch as a predator eagle flies down and scoops up a feral cat. Also the characteristic heritage features are more limited, as while the events pictured do occur in the homes of Picasso and his entourage, these at the period covered by the film were far from glamorous. For instance, the large villa at Ménerbes may have resembled a medieval palace from the outside, but inside it is barely habitable. In contrast, the rich surroundings and glamorous life associated with Picasso's period with his first wife, Olga, is shown in flashback, but in a very stylised form. A dinner party in a surreal dining room suggests the high living. This is preceded by one of Ivory's famous 'set pieces', placed as much to delight an audience as drive the narrative. Here, he recreates a performance of the Diaghilev Ballet within a cubist set and costumes and featuring Olga as the prima ballerina. This clearly sets up the change in Picasso's lifestyle according to his female partner of the moment. He has moved from high society to a simple rural family existence with Françoise. Dora Maar is shown against an urban café

244 His first wife Olga went insane, Marie-Thérèse hung herself, Dora Maar had a bout of madness and Jacqueline Roque, his second wife, shot herself. Gilot perceptively felt that the continuous presence of Picasso's several families on the edge of their own relationship "gradually made me realise that he had a kind of Bluebeard complex that made him want to cut off the heads of all the women he had collected in his little private museum" (quoted in Long, 1997: 241).

245 Jhabvala was so emotionally involved with the set of characters surrounding Picasso that she explained to the critic Robert Emmett Long (1997: 247) that she could not face visiting the 1996 exhibition of Picasso portraits at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, saying, "What! Go back into that snake pit?"

society, more at ease outside the home than in it, while Jacqueline Roque features in the workplace, either the studio or the pottery.²⁴⁶

High handed and cruel treatment is not limited to the immediate family circle. The film shows the dealers and hangers on surrounding the famous artist. While such colleagues may warrant little sympathy, as they all seem to make a very good living from putting up with Picasso's peccadillos, Picasso does plays cat and mouse with their hopes. There is almost a ritual, in the anteroom to his studio, of humiliation of all his followers, quite publicly, before they are offered some small incentive to keep them loyal and to some extent materially enslaved. There is no great differential in such treatment, as all seem to be subjected to great embarrassment. Even his most long standing dealer Kahnweiler has to wait a couple of days for an audience, although he has been summoned at Picasso's request, while the American dealer Sam Kootz is deliberately made to miss and have to rebook his transatlantic flights. The major Picasso biographer, John Richardson (1996: 14-15), while admitting that:

"In any film about a great artist the integrity of his work is at stake. In Picasso's case the revolutionary nature of the art and the paradoxical nature of the man call for very special skills: understanding of the workings of Modernism and insights into the dark side – the *duende* – of Picasso's profoundly ambivalent, profoundly Spanish character".

Richardson sides with the Picasso Estate in condemning James Ivory for choosing the wrong emphasis and examples of these traits, dismissing his attempts as those of a mere commercial entertainer rather than a seeker of the truth. The film's producer, David Wolper (2003: 212) fiercely defended the team's approach as Huffington's source biography was "a tough book, which depicted Picasso as brutal, a moral coward and a sexual sadist. Picasso saw women either as 'goddesses or doormats'".

This feel for *duende*, not surprisingly with its Andalucian background, also arises in *Little Ashes*. The poet and playwright Lorca praises the compositions of his friend

246 Richard Long comments that such interludes ensure that although, "There is a lot of darkness in the film, since Picasso is portrayed as a kind of monster. Yet it's not a morose or depressing film" (quoted in Ivory, 2005: 297).

composer Manuel de Falla for capturing this element of the national character. In contrast to de Falla's ability to suggest the essential darkness of the soul in music, Lorca berates his fellow students, including Dalí and Buñuel, suggesting they "will never triumph in your art, because you have no *duende* – a passion on the very edge of life and death". The type of emotion required is explained in the analogy that where "Everyone else in the world as night comes they draw their curtains, but in Spain they open them". That all three young men come to obtain this spirit, in writing (Lorca), in painting (Dalí) and in filmmaking (Buñuel) arises directly from their very selfish sexual adventures as much as from their regional Andalusian background. The scriptwriter made use of recent historical research that had for the first time examined the period when the three men were at university together. Their student days revolved around a *ménage-a-trois* between Lorca, Dalí and the actress Margarita Xirgu, where Margarita loved Lorca, Lorca loved Dalí, and Dalí loved himself. Dalí is very confused about his sexuality, at first refusing to acknowledge the attraction between himself and Lorca. When he finally does, he tries to sublimate it, eventually finding a release in voyeurism. He stays in Lorca's room while Margarita seduces Lorca and is greatly aroused by the experience. However, he cannot see any sense in continuing the life pattern that has evolved, as, in particular, it will hinder his high ambitions, so he rushes off to join Buñuel in Paris, where he meets his future wife and muse, Gala.

Overall *Love is the Devil* is a psychological rather than an artistic study, which is full of transgressive sexual practices and bad language, but which Maybury was keen to defend on the grounds that the film was only an adaptation of Bacon's real life antics, which Maybury felt could not be brought to the public screen at all (Buck, 1998: 6). Out of all this comes a portrait of Bacon as a masochist in his physical sexual relationships, but who acted as a sadist in his psychological relationships. The film shows him as a heavy drinker and compulsive gambler and most emphatically, the central personality within a rather hellish predominantly gay social circle. Bacon's biographer Peppiatt, believes of Bacon's sexual orientation that "Its importance...cannot be overstated" (Peppiatt, 1996: 17). There is not much to like in a man who shrugs off his lover's death the day before so that nothing can spoil his own accolade at his retrospective exhibition at the Grand Palais

in Paris. As Maybury has remarked: "Sometimes in order to create masterpieces you have to be monstrous" (Kalin, 1998: 65).

Greenaway's interpretation of Rembrandt is very unsentimental. Here, at the start of *Nightwatching* is a bumptious little man, extremely uncouth, where success has rather gone to his head. Only slowly over his lifetime, by the tragedy of the loss of his wife, mistress and son and the gradual dropping away of his patrons, is he brought to some kind of humility. The bleakness of the film stems from the human environment which Rembrandt inhabits. The characters exhibited are not only unsympathetic, they appear both tragic and reprehensible. In addition to the murder enquiry, Greenaway introduces a parallel uncovering of a large-scale paedophile ring also based around the patrons of *The Night Watch*.²⁴⁷

The more recent British artist biopic, *Boogie Woogie* (2009), rather unusually, offers a fictional survey of activity across London's contemporary art world, rather than a portrait of a single or group of artists. It attempts a biting satire on the British art scene and at first seems to have the very best credentials, involving people who have been at the centre of the art world. Firstly, it is based on Danny Moynihan's bestseller of 2000 and he himself is both screenwriter and producer. Secondly, the film's first-time director is Duncan Ward, who was also at the heart of the London art scene, having already made several short documentaries on contemporary artists including Tadeusz Kantor, and whose wife is the aristocratic curator Mollie Dent-Brocklehurst, who helped Gagosian establish his London operation. Thirdly, both Ward and Moynihan are friends of Damien Hirst and have been able to call on him to act as Curator and Artistic Adviser on the film. Finally, the cast list shows the producer's and director's contacts and reputation have also enabled them to recruit a stellar cast of British and American character actors to bring Moynihan's rogues' gallery to life.

247 The ring-leader is Deacon Rombout Kemp, running a child brothel from the orphanage just three doors down from Rembrandt's house. The horror is contained in the detail. Marieke, Kemp's daughter, for instance describes to Rembrandt when they are out on the roof terrace, "I come up her most nights when he has finished with me. We had a baby. It didn't have any legs. My father's baby. And it died." She then commits suicide by jumping off the roof and lands on railing spikes in the street below, struggling and screaming before dying (Greenaway, 2006: 107).

The film does not fully exploit all this inside potential, its central problem being the transfer of the book's setting in the New York of the 90s to London in the noughties. The official interview line of the director and screenwriter is that this was done to reflect the real movement of gravity in the world art market between the two cities. The art market has slumped and attitudes changed radically in the last couple of years, so the film has taken on a weirdly dated texture, emphasised by the intrusive jazz score, while Ward has a very pedestrian visual style, which one critic has compared to a cross between an Austin Powers movie and an ITV mini-series. He has fallen back too much on his experience as a theatre director rather than presenting the material for a cinema audience. The film's title relates to the first of a series of Mondrian paintings and the plot spirals out from the central storyline of several characters attempting to achieve its purchase from an ailing collector. Moynihan happily acknowledges he always saw the story in terms of brief Altmanesque sequences equivalent to the intertwining and cumulative nature of *Short Cuts* (1993). A complex round of rather schematic and unconvincing pairings and couplings result from these manoeuvres, more in keeping with Ophul's *La Ronde* (1950) based on Schnitzler's play, as characters shaft each other both figuratively and literally. However, the film fails to develop into a devastating morality tale as it is difficult to feel involved with the one-dimensional characters who sit within a series of mini-dramas which have little depth. The very black humour of the situations set-up depends on the creation of cardboard-like stereotypes, so the characters can be moved around in a light-hearted manner without the audience feeling an emotional attachment. The only exception to this is Alan Cumming's portrayal of agent Dewey Dalamanatousis and this does allow an audience frisson at the climax to the film as Dewey commits suicide, which is recorded for posterity in Elaine's, the new hit artist's, video.

The credentials of the director and screenplay writer add to the air of authenticity with many *à clef* references to the real London art world. For example, Jaime Winstone's character, Elaine, has been taken as a veiled portrait of Tracey Emin and the similar tone of Emin's tent and Elaine's frank video compared. Moynihan in his interview on the DVD release has insisted that all the characters are composites, so Danny Huston plays a

London based American dealer, Art Spindle with a Gagosian accent but with Jopling spectacles.²⁴⁸ His role is even more ironical if one knows that Gagosian himself did chase Mondrian's unfinished *Victory Boogie Woogie* in the mid-80s. Moynihan has admitted he was trying to get the balance right to avoid both offence and any possible legal wrangles. Again, the creations in wood of the young artist Jo Carter (played by Jack Huston), shown in his studio, seem to be a cross between the work of Conrad Shawcross and Carsten Höller.

The detailing of the film is exactly right, from the featuring of leggy girls in micro skirts as 'gallerinas' to the work of cinematographer John Mathieson. Mathieson had worked with John Maybury on the Francis Bacon biopic *Love is the Devil* (1996) where muted colour tones were used. Here, in contrast, the palette is inspired by the colour-saturated photographs of Philip-Lorca diCorcia. What defeats the director is trying to squash too many elements into a relatively short film, and the broken rhythm of the cutting in the final scenes suggests it was difficult to draw all the threads together. In the final element the characters' passion for art does not come through. They are all monsters in the art food chain, from the voyeuristic gallery owner Art Spindle, the heartless lesbian video artist Elaine, to the sadistic collector Bob Maclestone whose idea of a joke is to present his mistress with her aborted foetus cased Hirst-style in pickling fluid.

Chapter 4.6. Conclusion

Over seventy years of British cinema the artist biopic has been only a very small percentage of total output. However, this has included some renowned auteur directors in Korda, Russell, Watkins, Jarman, Maybury, Merchant and Greenaway. The films have mainly been associated with the production of either heritage or avant-garde features, more likely to be seen at the art house cinema than the multiplex. With the ever changing

248 Lawrence Gilbert "Larry" Gagosian (1945-) is an American art dealer with a chain of three art galleries in New York City, two in London, one in each of Los Angeles, Rome and Athens. He opened further branches in Paris and Geneva in 2010 and in Hong Kong in 2011. Jeremy "Jay" Jopling (1963-) is an English art dealer, closely associated with the Young British Artists via his White Cube gallery. He currently has another two galleries open in London.

conditions surrounding funding it is difficult to delineate this output as conforming to a set of features suggesting a distinct Britishness. Indeed, the growing reliance on international finance and markets could be argued to encourage a dilution of any distinct features. As Orr (2000: 337) has suggested:

these films “show us that film as art is not only about national identities but also about their transcendence. Only among a host of other compulsions do they meditate on a sense of Englishness as an acquired heritage of love and hate, to construct and deconstruct, to worship and to lampoon as myth. We should end too with a brief meditation on the very fragility of nationhood and identity in the transnational world of the information age.”

The pattern that does emerge is in effect a negative representation of the artist himself/herself, accompanied by a condemnation of modern art in the immediate post-war period. While the artist as genius trope remains intact, the artist as person is imagined as so unruly or devious or outside fit society that they are no longer automatically absolved of their defects. They may not pay a high personal price for their misdeeds but they no longer personally deserve the admiration of society generally. Perhaps the genius of creation is no longer worth the sacrifices it entails. In a few years after the Millennium the whole spectrum of membership of the London artistic scene has been identified as amoral, corrupt and predatory in *Boogie Woogie*. However, as in many circumstances, the exception can often confirm the rule and the film of *Miss Potter*, brings a lightness of touch and a whiff of sentimentality to the genre, in contrast to the grittier environment of the other biopics. For example, the animation of Potter's animal drawings is particularly effective in the Christmas scenes where an ordinary hansom cab is transformed into Cinderella's coach with all its fairy tale trappings. But even in this film, not only does Beatrix Potter have to struggle against her family's prejudices but also personal tragedy strikes. She attains fame and fortune as a children's author and book illustrator, but just as she is about to reap its rewards, she suffers the death of her secret fiancée and the consequent loss of her ability to draw. As a woman, she must seemingly pay a heavy price for success. However, the implications of gender, in the depiction of the female artist and the queer artist are the subject of the next two Chapters.

Chapter 5. The female artist biopic.

While some issues relating to sex and gender within the artist biopic have already been raised within preceding discussion on specific films, the next two chapters will focus on this issue in particular. Just as female artists have historically been under-represented in the artistic world itself, there is a similar under-representation within the artist biopic. This lack can be seen as both reflecting and, at the same time, promulgating a different approach within the biopic as a whole. For Bingham (2010: 22), a gender distinction becomes the central feature of his analysis of biopics in general, in the treatment of the male and female biopic as completely separate species. He argues that “they each have their own patterns of development, ideologies, and conventions”. This is reinforced by his splitting his book into two equal parts, even though Carolyn Anderson estimates only 28% of film biographies feature female leads (cited in Schlotterbeck, 2010:113). He proposes that while the male artist may follow the ‘Great Man’ scenario and end up both successful and a benefit to society as a whole, the female artist finds public success difficult and self-destroying, setting in motion a downward spiral of conflict and tragedy. In female biopics “a victim, whatever her profession, made a better subject than a survivor with a durable career or a non-traumatic personal life” (Bingham, 2010: 217). While accepting that there are tendencies towards a dichotomy between the male and female artist biopic, I argue in this chapter that the distinction is not as cut and dried within the artist biopic sub-genre as Bingham’s more general thesis would infer.²⁴⁹ There are many ambiguities to explain within the films about female artists and many of these films have deliberately tried to resist merely repeating a set of tropes, and have brought a fresh approach to the women’s lives depicted. These divergences become especially complicated and subtle when they include a study of the dynamics of the relationships between male and female artists who are together as couples, which will be analysed in relation to a number of films.

²⁴⁹ The suggestion has been given greater credence within the artist biopic because such features were particularly exemplified in the first female artist biopic to be widely distributed and successful at the box office, *Camille Claudel* (1988).

There has also been a gradual increase in the number of artist biopics exploring the lives of artists not conforming to heterosexual norms. The queer artist biopic has now appeared frequently enough for it to be considered a sub-genre in its own right. While academics have generally resisted defining 'queer' too precisely for fear of the term losing its powerful inclusivity (Stacey, 2007a:1)²⁵⁰, here, 'queer' is used as an umbrella term for the wide range of sexual identities that exist alongside the heterosexual which has traditionally been taken as normative. In this sense 'queer' is more inclusive than earlier terminologies and becomes a short-hand for the coverage of, among others, lesbian, gay, transsexual, bisexual, cross-dressing and transgender associations (Giffney, 2009b: 2).²⁵¹ These may be very dissimilar categories but are underwritten by a mutual engagement with non-normative sexual practices or identities (Lagose, 1996: 111). This grouping implies a positive, even aggressive, 'I am in your face' attitude towards promoting the legitimacy of such marginalised categories, drawing attention to the differences from the hegemonic (hetero) sexual norm rather than trying to minimise them.²⁵² These films also show a tendency to exhibit the tropes closer to the female than the male artist bio-pic. Several categories which fall under the broad umbrella of a queer lifestyle will be examined, starting with the lesbian artist. Then the female artist living in close contact with a homosexual community will form a bridge to the emergence of a third queer strand, the distinct gay artist biopic. The latter has seen sufficient examples to warrant its' own analysis as Chapter 6. In all these examples the artist's sexuality assumes greater importance than their artistic output reinforced by the distinctive tropes which have already emerged within the sub-genre.²⁵³

250 For example, Eve Sedgwick (1994, xii) points out that "Queer is a continuing moment, movement, motive – recurrent, eddying, *troublant*."

251 A film biography of artist Lili Elbe (born Einer Wegener), who received the world's first gender reassignment surgery, was announced in 2009, with Nicole Kidman both producing and starring. It was put on hold in 2011 (Anderson-Minshall: 1).

252 In the hip encyclopaedic guide to the queer lifestyle (Gage, 2002: 8) it is suggested that "Today, more than anything, Queer means 'Gay' first as a term of abuse, now as a banner to march under. It's gay with attitude. Gay with quite a lot of 'don't fuck with us' approach. But Queer, being the cheeky clever monkey that it is, has moved even beyond. Queer is now a state of mind, an outlook on life as well as a mere sexual preference."

253 The queer artist biopic is a narrower category than the simply 'queer film'. The latter has been defined by Benshoff (2006, 9-12) as containing one or more of five elements. The queer artist biopic relates primarily to the first category: the queer film can deal with characters that are queer. It is also written, directed, produced by or stars queer people; it is viewed by queer spectators and read differently by them to straight audiences; it is part of a genre that traditionally emphasises alternatives to 'normality', such as

I have only found ten films which purport to represent the life of a female artist as the main character of the film and these are listed in Appendix G. This leaves seventy-nine artist biopics with the male artist as the dominant character. While this may seem to make female artists very unrepresented, it seemingly reflects the status of female artists within the art world in general.²⁵⁴ Nochlin (1971 passim) highlighted the situation at the beginning of the feminist movement and pointed out the additional barriers placed in front of women artists to gain success which the male within a patriarchal society does not have to surmount. Such complications have been incorporated in the female artist biopic and will be discussed within the analysis of the individual films which is to follow. The production of this limited number of films does provide a showcase for the female artist on a small scale and make their life and work known to a wider audience. This can be part of a wider movement already in progress where the reputation of the artist is being re-examined and upgraded. This is true of *Camille Claudel* (1988) and *Frida* (2002), where the women as artists are given an existence beyond being mere inferior dependents of their male partners, Rodin and Diego Rivera respectively. Such films can also make the public aware of the work of an artist for the first time and create an appetite for their further discovery, as with *Aloïse* (1975), about Aloïse Corbaz, or *Séraphine* (2008), about Séraphine de Senlis.

The actual production of a female artist biopic has been heavily dependent on either the enthusiasm of the director for the artist depicted or on the female star envisaging herself in a substantial leading role. *Frida* was promoted by Salma Hayek as a star vehicle for herself, and she in turn won over Julie Taymor to be its director. The French actress Isabelle Adjani worked with director Bruno Nuytten, who was also her live-in partner at the time, for three years, researching the background and arranging financial

the horror film; where spectators are encouraged to identify with characters considerably different to what they perceive themselves to be.

254 Correspondingly, within the film industry it has taken until 2010 for a woman director, Kathryn Bigelow, to break through the barriers for women within the Academy Award voting system to win an Oscar for Best Director. She was only the fourth woman to be nominated for the award in the eighty-two year history of the Oscars (Weaver, 2010: 1).

backing for *Camille Claudel* (Goldin, 1990:38 and Borda, 2009:230).²⁵⁵ Considering the overall lack of interest in female artists and therefore the likelihood of a small return on investment in them, it is not surprising that the films are basically small-budget art-house productions, catering for a niche market. Even *Frida*, which was launched when a worldwide interest in Frida Kahlo had already formed owing to her being lionised by the feminist movement (Clifford, 2002: 61), only had a budget of twelve million dollars and Taymor had to curtail foreign location shooting and find alternative approaches for the story treatment in order to remain within budget. Such calculations can also explain why the female artist biopic was so late arriving on the scene, while their continuing small scale and modest financial return suggests they are likely to remain relatively infrequent.²⁵⁶

The male artist biopics that have been examined up to now have developed tropes from the 'Great Man' series of biographies from the major Hollywood studios of the 1930s. There tends to be a pattern within the life of rise, fall and then recovery with full public acknowledgement of their contribution to art. For the female, Bingham (2010: 24) in surveying biopics as a whole, suggests an entirely separate pattern of representation. With the 'warts-and-all' depictions of leading American personalities from the 1950s, particularly associated with the lives of entertainers, the predominant female pattern is assumed to be their rise, then fall, and a continued fall. This downward trajectory portrays the female as victim, compromised by the demands of home, love, marriage and motherhood versus her creative calling. To be a successful female within a patriarchal society brings fear to the establishment and the female is punished within a natural order of things, for in effect being presumptuous (Bingham, 2010: 10). This approach is exemplified by *I Want to Live* (1958) about Barbara Graham or *Lady Sings the Blues* (1972) about Billie Holiday. It is the suffering which creates the drama and interest, so rather than being celebratory "female biopics overall find conflict and tragedy in a

255 This pattern appears to be repeated in the production of *Camille Claudel 1915* (2012), where Juliette Binoche plays the title role and is directed by her collaborator Bruno Dumont. It was released in France on the thirteenth of March 2013 (Collet-White, 2013: 1) and is due in the UK on 20 June 2014.

256 Even *Camille Claudel*, which broke box-office records in France, only took \$201,000 in the United States (Borda, 2009: 230).

woman's success" (Bingham, 2010: 217).²⁵⁷ Some of the directors of female artist biopics are women and they have not necessarily fought this tendency. To a great extent the female artist cannot win in the way she is portrayed on film as "What is great and virile in the male artist is pathological in the female" (Felleman, 2006: 5). Bingham encapsulates his position as "Madness, hysteria, sexual dependency, the male gaze, and a patriarchal authorship: that is the classic female biopic" (Bingham, 2010: 310). In looking at the female artist biopics to be examined next it will be suggested that while Bingham acknowledges the rise of a 'feminist biopic' rejecting the classic female biopic formula, his analysis is too rigid for the sub-genre of the artist biopic, which displays great variation and subtlety in its representation of the female artist. This suggestion has been confirmed in the work of Polaschek (2013: 1), who makes a case for admitting a third category of female biopic, 'the postfeminist biopic', to lie alongside Bingham's simpler distinction between classical female biopic and the feminist biopic.²⁵⁸ This accounts for the female biopic now being constantly reinvented under the influence of the essential features of postmodernism, via the use of irony, humour and self-awareness (Garrett, 2007: 208) as in *Frida* (2002), *Fur* (2006) and *Miss Potter* (2006).

Chapter 5.1. *Camille Claudel*.

The analysis of individual female artist biopics will mainly focus upon those that have been most successful financially and seen by the largest audiences, namely *Camille Claudel*, *Artemisia* and *Frida*, but others will be included to compare and contrast on specific points. The most financially successful have in common a romantic view of the life where the director's interest lies in the love story and not the art. For *Camille Claudel* there is a strong melodramatic approach. For *Artemisia*, Merlet is willing to deliberately contradict the historical record to locate the flowering of Artemisia's creative abilities within a passionate mutual love affair. With *Frida*, Taymor (2002: 9) has declared that she only accepted the director's role because she wanted to film one of the world's greatest

257 Bingham (2010:220) is being generous in suggesting that "The dominant film institutions – and male directors- think they are being sympathetic to women by showing the process by which women are washed out as human beings and wash themselves out".

258 The term was first used in Dolan (2009), but from a different perspective, where it was seen as a tool to define the redundancy of feminism rather than its resurgence in a new guise.

love stories. In emphasising the romantic relationships, the female artist appears to be perpetuated as a second-class citizen, reliant on an older successful male artist mentor, her lover. She inevitably becomes to some extent a victim but there is a fluctuating balance of viewpoint as “self-objectification and masochism are writ large alongside identification and empowerment” (Vidal, 2007: 78).

The first female artist biopic to make an impression at the box office was about Camille Claudel who lived from 1864-1943. It helped set the pattern of victimisation of the female artist with which the genre is associated.²⁵⁹ This included both physical and mental abuse as well as the negatives implicit in trying to work within a patriarchal society. Such films wallow in suffering, addiction and degradation.²⁶⁰ However, a hint of a greater variation is there from the beginning. The film opens with Camille’s frantic gathering of clay from a building site in the middle of the night, and stuffing it into an old suitcase, which suggests compulsive behaviour if not an unhinged action. As it is night at this stage her face is obscured from the audience. This in turn symbolises a dark side to her character which is confirmed by the sense of anxiety engendered by her family not knowing where she has gone to and her brother Paul frantically searching for her. This state of unease is then immediately offset by her arrival in her studio at dawn. As the sun rises so Camille (played by Isabelle Adjani) moves into the light and for the first time the audience sees how beautiful she is, and also finds out what a sympathetic working relationship she has with her male model, Gigante. In this case she has ignored the unwritten rule that women should not use male models, especially naked ones.²⁶¹ Claudel is shown at this stage as determined to overcome the barriers to women becoming artists. Being wilful she is unimpressed with Rodin’s visit to the studio she shares with her English friend Jessie Lipscomb. She appears quite capable of looking after herself in a

259 *Aloise* (1975), *Charlotte S* (1980) and *Frida: Natureza Viva* (1985) had come before but had only a limited distribution, for instance, the latter only appeared outside Mexico at a few international film festivals between 1986 and 1989 (Shaw, 2010:308).

260 As Bingham (2010: 219) asserts, “Female biopics [in general] dramatise with proper Aristotelian pity and terror, the process of a woman’s degradation. This is what the downward trajectory essentially is”. The victimology-fetish female biopic is still very much alive and can be seen in *Factory Girl* (Hickenlooper, 2006), where the 1960s ‘IT’ girl Edie Sedgwick fails to escape from the downward spiral. This film is analysed in Chapter 6 but looking at a different theme, as one of the many manifestations of Andy Warhol in terms of his being a gay artist.

261 Nochlin (1971: 158-164) provides an historical summary of the barriers to women artists having access to nude models.

man's world, when we see her match the sexual taunts and banter of the male apprentices in Rodin's studio where she is taken on as a female apprentice. In doing so she has, however, transgressed a second rule in genteel society by going to work in a large mixed sex studio (Nochlin, 1971: 162). As the male apprentices' remarks imply, by this act she is automatically considered of loose morals, on a par with the female models, one of whom we (and Camille) see being seduced by Rodin.²⁶² Indeed, the enormity of Camille's breaking of social rules is probably not made clear enough for a twentieth century audience. It is Rodin (played by Gerard Depardieu) who recognises a spark of genius in her work and is even willing to go to her family to plead and try and keep her in his team. Ultimately this is to improve his own reputation and commissions, not for her to improve herself and branch out on her own. The successful male sculptor holds a monopoly on important government patronage. What finally persuades her into becoming Rodin's muse and mistress is the death of Victor Hugo, where the outpouring of public grief in France was enormous. Both her model Gigante and Rodin worshipped the man. To assuage the depth of the emotional reaction Camille does not just give herself to Rodin, she acts as if she were the subservient model she has espied with Rodin. She mounts the model's dais, unpicking her hair and brushing the long locks away from the nape of her neck as she twists into a pose that highlights her sculptured bones. She has boldly become Rodin's property to do as he wills and has resigned her equal status in a creative partnership.

The film attracts attention to Claudel's artistic output as worthy of consideration in its own right, but also has to acknowledge how much of it was done under Rodin's tutelage, and also that it is difficult to ascertain how much of Rodin's work she actually carried out. This is emphasised in Camille's confrontation with her father. He has always supported her artistic aims but is distressed when her own work becomes subordinated to Rodin's.²⁶³ This subordination is then the theme of the rest of the film as Camille

262 Apprentice: Come on honey! Show me what you've got. CC: Get Off! App: You're asking for it...I'll get you. Girls don't play coy for long, here. CC: You can play without me. You'd better stick to plastering. Don't you get it? You're like plaster. Dull and sticky.

263 The film asserts one of Custen's (1992, 68-69) basic tenets that a biopic relies on the opposition of family to provide exciting conflict. Up to this point Camille has a very supportive relationship with her father. For them to fall out over her artistic work is very upsetting for Camille. Her mother is shown from the start as completely opposed to a daughter of hers possessing an artistic career. She may also be jealous

continues as Rodin's mistress for ten years. In this film it is Rodin who is blamed for her mental decline after their rupture over his unwillingness to marry her or leave his common law wife, Rose Beuret, who has had his children, while Camille has aborted hers. This interpretation is signposted by telescoping Camille's decline into a brief period, when it actually lasted fifteen years, and ignoring how much support Rodin really continued to offer her. This interpretation was insisted on by the Claudel family, who wanted no blame for finally locking her away in an asylum in 1913.²⁶⁴ Camille's deterioration is conveyed in a series of scenes showing the different aspects of her sickness.²⁶⁵ Critics have differed over the effect of how this is shown. Walker (1993:89) considers that "Camille the proud artist takes precedence over Camille the lovesick woman"; whereas Pollock (1998:27) thinks she is belittled by being depicted as a lovelorn victim. Higonnet (1993: 28-29) points out that this situation is inherent in the very act of releasing the artist from Rodin's shadow, as the price of fame is for anonymity to be replaced by a new feminine stereotype of victimisation. I would come out on the side of Lynch (1998:3) who is near to Pollock in that he sees that the initial decision to place an emphasis on melodrama must in itself weaken the case for her artistic output.

Chapter 5.2. Female artists and madness.

In its most extreme form then, the contradictory and competing elements in the lives of female artists can end in madness, whether imposed via the cruelties of the victimising world or self-induced by insistence on having their own way and ignoring society's mores (Bingham, 2010: 217). Such perception is not, of course, confined to the world of the cinema or solely to women artists. Showalter (1987: 8) has shown how by

of the attention the rest of the family pay to Camille and her whims. She at first refuses to speak to Camille and eventually, when Camille tries to call to see her father, she does not even acknowledge her existence.
 264 Adjani had to negotiate with the Claudel family over the script to overcome their objections. Walker (1993:86) suggests Camille was locked away as soon as the father died because under French law they did not want an unstable Camille to inherit the estate. It is ironic that the family did not object to scenes implying an incestuous relationship between her brother Paul and Camille, together with the implication that Paul's growing interest in religion was a displacement of his passion for Camille (Lynch, 1998:3).

265 Camille follows Rodin around; she hurls abuse and garbage outside his flat; she hides away in her studio with the windows boarded up; she destroys all her plaster casts. She becomes less and less concerned about her appearance and wellbeing, a feature slightly diminished by the difficulty of disguising Adjani's innate health and beauty, and ends up an alcoholic.

the end of the eighteenth century women rather than men were used as an allegory of the insane in France: for example in Tony Robert-Fleury's painting *Pinel Freeing the Insane* (1887), where all the asylum inmates are women. Madness has been seen as an essential part of feminine nature which is reflected in the greater representation of women among the mentally ill (Appignanesi, 2008: 6). This was considered to be caused by their being more irrational, finding it harder to communicate at a higher level, and being nearer both to nature and the body than men. The title of Appagnanesi's history of women and the mind doctors, *Mad, Bad and Sad* (2008) indicates the prevailing patriarchal view of the times. Harper's study of notable women in British cinema is subtitled *Mad, Bad and Dangerous to Know* (2000). Even the gentle pastime of reading, let alone the vigorous physical stimulation of creating works of art, was considered by the late seventeenth century to be enough to upset women's mental stability and could be harmful (Bollman, 2008: 27).

In this context it is interesting to compare the treatment of mental health problems depicted in the films about two other female artists. It is made clear in *Séraphine*, when she is visited by the nuns who brought her up, that she has suffered from hearing voices since childhood. As an ill child she was brought up within a convent and the voices she hears are of a religious nature. While she has obviously managed to live outside the Convent as an adult, her diminished mental faculties have limited her capacity to perform anything but low status physical jobs such as laundering and house cleaning. Her painting and view of the world as represented in the film appear to be both a result of her lifelong illness and a blessed release from it, rather than the dedication to painting itself causing a decline in her standards of behaviour. She is very tough physically, able to work through the night on her painting and still carry out her household duties during the day. *Séraphine* suggests that her failing mental state is a result of the relief from the discipline involved in combining painting with an endless round of drudgery when she begins to become recognised as an artist, and receive an adequate income. For the first time she has free time to sit and think. This idleness not only leads her to enjoy a period of conspicuous consumption but also sees her retreating to the teachings of her years as a ward and servant in a convent, becoming obsessed with undergoing a form of marriage to Christ just like her lifelong friends the nuns. It is when

she parades publicly in the street dressed in her bridal gown and freely gives away her worldly goods that she ends up incarcerated in an asylum, without her painting as therapy. So she does pay heavily for her period of success, as she is in the asylum for the rest of her life, some ten years, where even her patron, Uhde soon leaves her to rot.

For Aloise Corbaz, in *Aloise*, an urge to paint emerges from a course of therapy within the asylum where she has been having treatment since her early twenties. Its outpouring is depicted as a triumphant release of her true inner spirit, just like *Séraphine*, which she has been unable to express in words. However, her story ends relatively happily with her being taken to see her one-woman public exhibition which gives her artistic recognition. For her, painting does not bring her down, rather it enables her to achieve a mental comfort and to be restored to a limited position in regular society, albeit that she remains institutionalised. So the female artist's route to madness can have varied origins. Within these, the role of painting or sculpture, in being creative, can be both cause and cure. For Camille Claudel art is an obsession even before she meets Rodin. It remains the core of her life as other parts of it, including her close personal relationships, are stripped away. For *Séraphine*, her paintings have kept her 'voices' at a manageable volume. Only when she becomes idle do they take over her mind. While for Aloise her painting comes late in life as a salvation, providing some recompense for all her adult years locked away in an asylum.

Returning to *Camille Claudel* there is little within the film with which to compare her work with that of other sculptors and it is also difficult to place it in the context of the times: there is only the funeral of Victor Hugo and a brief shot of a half completed Eiffel Tower as Camille emerges from the doctor's.²⁶⁶ Camille's insistence on refusing Rodin's help, at great cost to her health and wealth, is itself a powerful statement in convincingly displaying Claudel as a feminist icon. She manages to carry on without surrendering any of her principles or artistic practices, caught up in an exhausting creative fever. While

266 I see the Tower being shown as an ironic comment on Rodin's fertility rather than as an indication of date and place. Camille has just had an abortion. In the film she only has one but in real life she had at least five (Lynch, 1998: 2), while Rodin's common law wife, Rose Beuret bore him several children and provided a family life.

Rodin's inspiration dries up after the two separate, she becomes even more of a workaholic producing new and original ideas, though no-one is prepared to buy the finished products and she is ignored for public commissions. The case for the genius of her work is made in two exhibition sequences, where the camera wanders around the exhibits showing them from several angles. Nuytten's reputation as a great cinematographer on *Jean de la Florette* and *Manon des Sources* is reflected in the *mise-en-scene*, particularly in the recreation of Rodin's studios which display a meticulous recreation of period detail (Zone, 2002: 120). However, few of the processes in sculpting are shown and it proves difficult to match the images of a fragile Adjani delicately chiselling with the real physical effort required to produce the sculpture on show. The emphasis is on Camille's work with Rodin, with the objects on display at their joint exhibition being shown in detail, in a manner reminiscent of Ken Russell's homage to Gaudier-Brzeska in *Savage Messiah* (see Chapter 2.5). The second exhibition, her only one-person exhibition, held in 1905, concentrates on the people attending rather than the sculptures, in particular on her brother Paul's disgusted reaction to her attending in outrageous dress and make-up accompanied by a mob of drunken friends.

Chapter 5.3. Artemisia.

If *Camille Claudel* has been resented by some feminist critics for its stereotypical downward narrative trajectory (for example, Pollock, 1998: 27 or Borda, 2009: 240-241), it is nothing to the opprobrium conferred on Agnès Merlet's *Artemisia* (1997), an interpretation of the early life of Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1656). Where *Camille Claudel* provided a believable, if telescoped, analysis of Claudel's impossible situation and subsequent deterioration, Merlet took what was historically a very positive image of the artist and in a new narrative deliberately reversed the cause of central events, so transforming Artemisia into another tragic victim of love, albeit retaining more fighting spirit than Claudel towards the end of her vicissitudes. Effective picketing of cinemas showing the film in the United States, by academics and critics who were on the feminists' side, brought the film within contemporary arguments on gender and authorship, where Merlet had been unconcerned to historicise such matters. The campaign was led by feminist writer Gloria Steinem in collaboration with the art historian

Mary Garrard, who had written a feminist analysis of Artemisia's work. They produced a factsheet (Garrard, 1998) for distribution at each venue showing the film. Its headline grabbing title reflects its style and intentions: "New film artists history to create a fictionalized and sensationalized 'Truth'! Now that you've seen the film, meet the real Artemisia Gentileschi..." A campaign resulted in the producer's claim being removed, which had appeared on advertising posters and in the film's credits, that the film was based on a true incident. What on the surface appears at first sight a costume drama and historical romance more in the style of a conventional Hollywood biopic than a European art house film, emerges as a very controversial artist biopic (Pollock, 1998: 27).

Merlet shows no interest in reproducing Artemisia's life within a truthful art history context, preferring to place her emphasis on the interpretation that the unleashing of Artemisia's sexuality is the most important aspect of her story. Indeed, by the very act of limiting the interpretation of Artemisia's life to the two years surrounding her rape trial, the film inevitably disproportionately sexualises her biography.²⁶⁷ It is suggested, rather simplistically, that only through her fulfilment in a physical love affair can she become a great artist. To achieve this involves a wholesale revision of history. For example, the rape of Artemisia by landscape painter Agostino Tassi in 1612 is treated as a love affair ignited by Artemisia. Her real life accusations of rape at a trial, instigated by her father, and sustained under torture, are replaced in the film by Artemisia swearing under oath that she was not raped. Tassi then becomes a noble lover who protects her from further torture by accepting a false charge of rape. Artemisia's genius is debased as she is portrayed in a standard female artist trope as the creation of her male mentor, Tassi, both for the maturing of her artistic work through knowing a great love, and in his showing her a new technical language of painting based on the principles of landscape painting. In practice he was a very second-rate painter and she never learnt the art of landscape painting, hiring other artists to paint the landscape backgrounds in her

267 In doing so, Olsin Lent (2006: 213) would argue that Merlet is simply following the set path already drawn up in the novelisations of Artemisia's life – for example, Anna Banti's *Artemisia* of 1947 (English translation from the Italian 1988, from the University of Nebraska Press) - as well as in scholarly monographs, for example, Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock's *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, New York: Pantheon, 1981, or, Mary D. Garrard's *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

paintings. As Vidal (2007: 72-73) argues, the dwelling on her sexual objectification and abuse within her tale of sexual awakening and heterosexual romance places the depiction of her struggle as a woman artist for self-expression and professional independence in a secondary place.²⁶⁸

Despite this focus on Artemisia as a female victim and her work and life being subordinated to the males within her purview, there remains an ambiguity around Merlet's portrait of her, owing particularly, at least in the first half, to a constant shifting of the camera's viewpoint. There is frequent juxtaposition of a scopophilic male gaze as expounded by Laura Mulvey (1975), against examples of the much rarer use of a female orientated scopophilic gaze. The latter is invoked in the repeated close-ups of Artemisia's eyes, with her activity as a voyeur and her simple pleasure in looking at the world around her (Vidal, 2007: 79). In the pre-credits sequence Artemisia is immediately sexualised as she is shown attending a service in the convent chapel, but rather than praying she is examining, through slits in her fingers held up in prayer, the male nudes depicted in the chapel's wall paintings. She steals a candle on the way out of the chapel and, immediately after the credits, Artemisia is shown examining her body by candlelight in her cell. This is the only place she can do this with no-one else is around as the church strictly forbids women studying the naked human form. However, while the purpose of the self-examination may be laudable in extending her artistic knowledge and skill, the way it is shown is salacious, like a man drooling over an adult magazine. When Artemisia is taken out of the convent by her father and placed in his studio, Merlet, next takes the opportunity to show a live male nude from a woman's point of view, as Artemisia peeks around the curtains behind which stands a naked model for her father's painting of St. Joseph. Her natural curiosity in and artistic interest in the male body are emphasised as she also draws the model's torso in outline on the surrounding curtain, using his shadow cast from the use of many candles. This viewpoint is similarly used for Artemisia's importuning of her friend Fulvio, a fisherman. He at first thinks she wants sex and is very

268 The economic pressure to market the film for maximum return and to exploit its academic notoriety is evident in the (inevitable?) distortion of the film's main theme in its promotional material. The film poster and DVD cover were 'sexed up' by the distributor Miramax, using the publicity tag "Her forbidden passion changed the face of History" (Vidal, 2007: 76).

disconcerted to find she only wants practice in drawing him naked. The camera then shows him disrobed as if through Artemisia's eyes. The display is an example of the kind of content that would not be acceptable in a Hollywood film of the time, but was obviously considered possible within a film purporting to be about high culture.²⁶⁹ As it is entirely imaginary and not based on any extant records it can be considered unnecessary and just another case of increasing the sex content and nudity. On her way back from the beach she voyeuristically watches a couple making love on the sand and she experiences the feel of it second-hand by going down to the beach when they have gone and inserting herself into the impressions their bodies have made. The final piece of overt nudity and sexuality occurs as Artemisia walks home. Seeing light and hearing music where Agnostino Tassi is lodging, she creeps over to a window and with adolescent curiosity views an orgy in progress: again a rather salacious episode with a male gaze. These viewpoints are crucial in building up the sexual atmosphere, so that the audience is ready for Artemisia to want her own sexual experience and to fall in love. They also provide evidence for Tassi to believe she is already sexually active as he sees the sketches she has made and sees her watching the orgy through the window. Historically there is no evidence she made any such drawings. The centrality of the female gaze in the first half of the film is counterbalanced by the victimisation of Artemisia in the second half.

Merlet turns her tale into a romance, eschewing the chance to show Artemisia as the proto-feminist icon she is often held up to be.²⁷⁰ When her father accuses Tassi of her rape and brings criminal charges against him, Artemisia vehemently defends the man shown in the film as her lover rather than as a rapist. She is willing to undergo torture by *sibille* on his behalf (similar to the thumbscrew and therefore of great potential damage to her painter's hands) and risk losing the future ability to paint. However, this is no broken woman. Tassi pleads guilty simply to save her suffering. She is not the tormented victim. Her predicament is caused by her father being jealous of Tassi and she responds strongly by backing her lover in court. Her sexual awakening is suggested as being the key

269 The film was originally rated NC-17 in the USA for graphic sexuality and nudity (meaning newspapers would refuse to advertise it) but re-rated R on appeal (Cetti, n.d.: 1).

270 For example, in Mary D. Garrard's *Artemisia Gentileschi Around 1622: The Shaping and Reshaping of an Artistic Identity*, Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2001.

to her subsequent success as an artist. The film's epilogue back at her home and studio suggests also that the trial set her off into wanderings across Europe that were essential for both stimulation and patronage. The end credits make her subsequent artistic success clear.²⁷¹

As Tibbetts (1998: 82) points out, while *Artemisia* may not display a great many of Artemisia's paintings, it does provide more detail about the art and practice of painting, here in the Baroque period, than many other biopics, so adding to its air of authenticity as a whole. It explores the studios of each of the main characters, Artemisia, Tassi and Orazio Gentileschi: the preparation of fresco 'cartoons'; the apparatus of pulleys and ropes used for moving figures and props for religious paintings; the laborious mixing of paints from ground-up powders. One technique in particular, by dint of repetition at key moments, adds resonance to the film. Tassi introduces Artemisia to the use of a grid frame, a rectangular wooden frame across which strings are drawn at right angles to each other, as a viewfinder to convey the use of perspective in landscape painting. It becomes more than a solution to successful painting, as its use focuses the viewer's attention upon the character so framed.²⁷² Artemisia is held within it in the most used still from the film. She becomes the spectacle, trapped within Tassi's gaze and defined by his relation to her, so the audience also identifies with a voyeuristic mode (Felleman, 2001: 30). Its use reinforces the stereotype of a woman artist requiring a superior male mentor. Later, when Tassi is imprisoned for her rape, the grill of the cell window in effect becomes a painter's grid which reinforces his feeling of confinement, especially as his voiceover repeats the landscape he conjured up in words when the couple first met. He can now only imagine the scene, in the way he taught Artemisia to do, as he is confined to his cell.

271 Such awakening, the staple of many narrative films, is also implicit in another artist biopic *Fur*. This time the film's subsidiary title makes it clear that it is *An Imaginary Portrait of Diane Arbus*. It is a speculative attempt to explain how Arbus, then an upper-class New York housewife, emerged as a confident innovative photographer of the ugly and marginalised only three months after emerging from the shadow of her husband's commercial photographer's business. The film uses the fairytale of Beauty and the Beast as the basis for a tragic romance that transforms the shy and repressed Arbus. This fantasy has Arbus discovering that her family's new neighbour in their apartment block is a 'wolf man' called Lionel who suffers from hypertrichosis (extreme hairyness). He introduces her to the world of the abnormal, an underworld of (friendly) freaks, making her aware of her 'dark side'. Then, after they have consummated their love he conveniently dies leaving her to develop her unique photographic approach to her sitters.

272 This device is also prominently featured in Peter Greenaway's 1982 film *The Draughtsman's Contract* (Tibbetts, 1998: 83).

However, Artemisia is no longer trapped within such restricted intellectual or physical boundaries, being freed to roam over Europe seeking commissions. He has in effect unintentionally liberated her, so she is no longer the stereotyped subordinate female artist.

The film's use of Artemisia's art is also a-historical but with a purposeful effect. Her canvases are not only shown in the wrong ratios, usually enlarged for more cinematic impact, but are also used thematically rather than within a strict historical chronology. The most obvious example is her *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, of which she produced seven versions, the first painted in 1611-1612: none of which were painted until after the events depicted in the film. Also Tassi is used as a model for Holofernes, which works as a potent dramatic device for Merlet's interpretation of the life story. It suggests a basis for their romantic association, in that Artemisia was painting forbidden subjects, and also that she retained a power within the relationship. This relationship is, however, bound to end unhappily by its association with the content of the painting, where Judith succeeds in beheading her potential rapist. The choice of paintings used in the film does celebrate the power of women, while at the same time implying a rejection of conventional feminine roles. In this sense Artemesia retains her proto-feminist status, but it is a very subtle use of the iconic status and probably only an audience with a knowledge of art history would understand the references.

Chapter 5.4. Frida.

In *Camille Claudel* the artist is shown artistically subordinate to Rodin even though the film focuses on her. In *Artemisia* the protagonist's relationship with Tassi is only for a short duration at the start of her career. In *Frida* there is the opportunity to follow the lifetime partnership of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera with its complex developments over time and ramifications. The director, Julie Taymor, keeps this more equal relationship at the heart of the film. She explained that

"Most movies about artists wallow in the angst, and they repel me...What I found intriguing about *Frida* was the prospect of striking a balance between the realism of a period piece set in the

Twenties, Thirties and Forties and the interior landscape of this woman's mind. I was blown away by the love affair between Frida and Diego, which is the most unusual love story I've ever seen. It was a love affair with unbelievable parameters, and through everything, they were the most supportive of artists to each other (quoted in Bosley, 2002: 35)".

The film attempts to show the ebb and flow of their relationship and which partner drove it at a particular time. As in *Camille Claudel* the overall approach towards the artist's life is via melodrama which in itself tends to privilege the woman over the art; but here, as Olsin Lent (2007: 74) argues, the added use of biopic cliché produces an even stronger romantic melodrama as "Taymor interprets Frida as a woman whose emotional intensity emphasises her life and her art". This is very close to repeating the approach of the standard women's 'weepie' film.²⁷³

While Rivera is depicted as Frida's mentor he is always shown to have the greatest respect for her work. In the script he endorses her genius at several points. Frida relies on his judgement in making the all-important decision to pursue her art; in New York Diego informs reporters that Frida is an artist and a better one than he is; and finally he gives the eulogy to Frida at her one woman show in Mexico City. This appreciation of her work helps keep Frida viewed as an equal partner even though in practice it was Diego who was being feted internationally while Frida still awaited recognition at home in Mexico. In addition the way Frida's self-portraits are placed within the narrative and brought to life gives them a powerful autobiographical effect, not only relevant to the place reached in her life story but also quite fascinating in their own right.²⁷⁴ The other outstanding special effects lie within the two montage sequences, which suggest the two periods of extended overseas travel undertaken by the couple. They also suggest their internationalism and world status. Montages were in fact used because the film's limited

273 Throughout this section on *Frida*, a major Hollywood promoted venture, I shall be comparing it to the little known Mexican independent production, *Frida Naturaleza Vida* (1975), directed by Paul Leduc, because it takes such decidedly different approaches to depicting both Kahlo's life and art.

274 Taymor remarked that "Like many people, I found her paintings gruesome and revealing, but as a film director, they appealed to me because of their narrative content. I thought that using photography and visual effects to make them unfold before your eyes would be a great addition to what might otherwise be a normal biopic" (quoted in Bosley, 2002: 42). One of the most startling effects occurs as Frida Kahlo lies drifting in and out of consciousness after her trolley bus accident. Renowned puppet animators The Brothers Quay created an abstract nightmare using frenetic skeletons whose design was based on those depicted in the Mexican Day of the Dead (Bosley, 2002: 45).

budget did not permit filming in the original locations other than within Mexico.²⁷⁵ Live-action footage of the actors against cityscape cut-outs blends with agit-prop type photo-montages and newsreel clips all in black and white. These are joined by streamlined art-deco motifs associated with New York which stand in for the visit to the United States in 1930. The art-deco references are replaced by art nouveau motifs to suggest a later trip to Paris (Bosley, 2002: 37-38).

Taymor chooses to emphasise Frida and Diego's love story over the pain and angst prominent in the historical treatises on Frida's life.²⁷⁶ In doing so Taymor is to some extent following the trend in female biopics in the 1990s to follow a 'survival scenario' rather than present the female artist simply as victim. The female partner emerges from the male partner's shadow (who is a genius) and is recognised as an artist in her own right (Vidal, 2007: 74). To achieve this she shows great courage over adversity. This can be seen also in *Surviving Picasso* (see Chapter 4.5: 149-151), *Artemisia* and, in a gentler form, in *Miss Potter*.²⁷⁷ Taymor achieves this by playing down Frida's physical incapacity and she remains very mobile and agile. Even the trolley car accident which was to maim her for life is shown as a series of beautiful tableaux literally sprinkled with gold dust, as the dust was being transported by one of the other passengers (Shaw, 2010: 302). Contrast this to

275 Diego Rivera did visit the same factories in Detroit that are shown in the American newsreel clips (Bosley, 2002: 45). Only a few of the authentic Mexican locations could be filmed, such as the Pyramid of the Moon at Teotihuacan, because in others, particularly Mexico City, the air was too polluted for outdoor shots. Taymor wanted crisp bright images with very vibrant and bright colours, which were still found in San Louis Potozi and Puebla (Bosley, 2002: 37-38).

276 The still standard biography by Hayden Herrera (2002) is the stated source text in the published screenplay and acknowledged in the film's credits. This focuses on Kahlo's inability to cope with her suffering. "Thematically, this established Kahlo's personal suffering as the motivating force behind her representation of self as spectacle, both in painting and in life" (Olsin Lent, 2007: 70). The Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes, in the introduction to Frida's published diary, confirms that, "She suffered thirty-two operations from the day of her accident to the day of her death. Her biography consists of twenty-nine years of pain. From 1944 on, she is forced to wear eight corsets. In 1953, her leg is amputated as gangrene sets in. She secretes through her wounded back, 'smelling like a dead dog'...She is forever surrounded by clots, chloroform, bandages, needles, scalpels. She is the Mexican Saint Sebastian" (quoted in the Introduction to Lowe, 1995: 12). Taymor's film treatment is also in sympathy with Herrera's hyperheterosexual treatment of Frida's love story, which he views through what Borsa (2001: 262) dubs an "incredible heterosexual lens."

277 In *Miss Potter* (2006) Ellam (2012: 4) argues that the diffusion of negative emotions is achieved by Beatrix Potter's feelings and thoughts being projected upon silent animated characters taken directly from her childrens books: which 'interior fantasy', only she can see. For example, when she is subjected to her greatest crisis and is mourning the loss of her fiancé Norman Warne, she draws the frog Jeremy Fisher and he is attacked on his lily-pad by a giant fish. As she next reaches out her paintbrush in a desperate effort to try and pull him to safety she is actively fighting back against her illness.

the situation in Leduc's *Frida Naturaleza Vida* (1985) where a wheelchair is hardly ever absent from the frame and Kahlo is forever having to take to her bed or bath, clean and adjust her body corsets and indulge in alcohol; and narcotics to surmount her constant pain.

In *Frida*, Kahlo as heroine is also depoliticised to make her acceptable to American audiences. For Ruiz-Alfaro (2012: 1131) she is deliberately transformed into "a light version of Kahlo accessible and appealing to mainstream audiences." Diego is portrayed as the real political animal with Frida merely supporting him and without views of her own. Even then the politics is very muted, with omission of her Communist beliefs and party membership and in particular her Anti-Americanism.²⁷⁸ Her affair with Trotsky is conveyed in terms of a mutual attraction, rather than being part of the couple's longstanding support for a particular wing of the Communist Party, which continued despite the growing evidence about Stalin's purges, and above all after the murder of Trotsky whom they had sheltered. Again, contrast this to *Frida Naturaleza Vida* where her fierce political radicalism is foregrounded, the film both opening and the loose narrative closing, with a bright red Soviet flag featuring a hammer and sickle draped over her coffin. Olsin Lent (2007: 70-71) argues persuasively that with Frida already a feminist icon before Taymor's film was made, this de-radicalisation in *Frida* enables her to appeal to an even wider audience. Shaw (2010: 299-300) thinks it had an important influence in the USA by helping to integrate Latinos into the US body politic via "the creation of a new idealised Latina subject through the fusion of Salma Hayek with Frida Kahlo", especially as the resulting hybrid is English speaking.²⁷⁹ Frida is thus presented in a very modern American manner as a "product of her own invention" (Bartra, 2005: 454). Such a "penchant for autoconstruction" (Custen, 1992: 149) appears to be a general feature of US biopics.

278 Kahlo's particular contribution within the Mexican Communist Party was in support of land redistribution, the nationalisation of private industries and the growth of the United Front of Women's Rights (Molina- Guzmán, 2010a: 90).

279 This is rather ironic in that although Salma Hayek was born in Mexico, few other Mexicans were actually employed on the film (Shaw, 2010: 301).

Frida and Diego are portrayed as an inseparable couple, but the film also makes clear that this devotion was based on a notion of loyalty rather than fidelity.²⁸⁰ They were in an 'open' marriage where both were free to pursue love affairs outside their marriage but would remain true to each other by always supporting and advancing the other's work and wellbeing. In this sense Diego always retained the upper hand in their relationship, using his reputation as a painter to pursue affairs throughout the couple's relationship. The arrangement was decidedly bohemian and was an essential part of their avant-garde image, but the pattern of their divorce, in 1939, and subsequent remarriage, in 1940, suggests this leeway was essential to the maintenance of their relationship and not just for show. Their feelings were so intense that while they could not always bear to live together they equally could not live apart. However, Frida is shown to have some difficulties accepting this status quo. For example, Rivera's licence to roam is overstepped when he seduces Frida's younger sister Cristina, which Kahlo considers breached the vow of loyalty and she leaves him for several months in 1935.

A similar situation occurs in *Pollock* (2000) where abstract impressionist painter Jackson Pollock and his painter wife Lee Krasner eternally bicker over his womanising. However, their early relationship held a very different balance as Krasner was prepared to subordinate her own career completely to promoting that of Pollock. According to Codell (2011: 132), this can be interpreted as less of a romantic action and more as a way of undertaking a higher cause and to save Pollock from himself so that he can become the saviour and genius of American art. The film suggests this was her choice as she took the initiative right from the start of their relationship. Such devotion is flexible to the extent that she attempts to promote and groom him she yet retains proto-feminist traits. She makes her position clear on their first date when he calls at her studio. After asking if he wants coffee and he says "Yes", expecting her to make it, she grabs her coat and handbag

280 This point is discussed in the screenplay, (*Sunshine*, 2002: 69-70) after Diego and Frida have made love for the first time. Diego: The thing is...I think it's quite possible that we were born for each other...so we should marry. Frida: But you don't believe in marriage. D: Of course I do. I've had two wives already! F: Exactly! You can't be true to only one woman. D: 'True', yes, 'Faithful', no. Unfortunately, I'm physiologically incapable of fidelity. F: Oh, really? D: Yes. A doctor acquaintance of mine confirmed this. F: What a convenient diagnosis. D: Is fidelity that important to you? F: Loyalty is important to me. Can you be loyal? D: To you, always. F: Good because I love you; panzon. D: Friducha. F: I accept.

and replies “You don’t think I do coffee, do you?” and takes him out to the corner café.²⁸¹ This sets the scene for a dichotomy in the way Krasner is presented. On the one hand she is the woman who mothers Pollock, while on the other she is a woman who can navigate the art gallery world and cope with dealers and critics. She even takes the stereotypical ‘masculine’ role of inviting sex. She is capable of achieving all these things because she is not a ravishing beauty or highly sexualised and so not so much of a threat to the males in society. The irony is, as Codell (2011: 134) notes, “Her reward is a long life and a successful career, but no biopic of her own”.

With Kahlo and Rivera, in life, the varying strength of their bond was reflected in Frida’s personal (not painted) appearance, becoming more ‘Mexicanidad’ when they were close.²⁸² Frida wore contemporary dress before her marriage and in the periods of her separation from Rivera. He encouraged her to wear traditional colourful dress, so that “Kahlo transformed herself into a spectacle, literally becoming an animated piece of Mexican folk art” (Olsin Lent, 2007: 72). This is not quite so marked in the case in the two Frida films, where she is perpetually given an exotic treatment and placed amid a timeless Mexico of heat, vibrant colour and folk melodies. Chadwick (1993a: 12) considers Kahlo’s spectacular appearance gave her a very real advantage compared to female artists in non-latin countries, as she was based within a Latin culture where the possession of a bright allure and femininity immediately gave women a greater acceptance as an individual within society.

Chapter 5.5. The lesbian artist.

Neither *Frida* nor *Frida Naturaleza Vida* is afraid to depict relationships beyond the heterosexual norm, though it is unusual to find this in *Frida*, where an established icon is being portrayed in a film in the Hollywood style aimed at mainstream audiences.

281 Similarly one cannot imagine Kahlo cheerfully chopping the vegetables in the kitchen. However, in *Frida Naturaleza Vida* the kitchen is the location of the most explicit lesbian seduction.

282 Olsin Lent (2007: 72) describes *Mexicanidad* as “the ideology held by intellectuals and artists in Mexico’s post-revolutionary period that recognised the Indian and folk heritage of Mexico as its true cultural patrimony, while rejecting as formative the influences of European politics and arts during the Colonial era”. Frida’s self-portraits always suggest a bold native Mexican appearance.

Bartra (2005: 455) finds that “In placing a Mexican mestizo woman –who, moreover, drinks heavily, takes drugs, and has lesbian relations – at the centre of the story, *Frida* has gone against the grain of biopics, where history is male, white and American.” Even so, many negative factors are ignored to avoid too much dwelling on Frida’s dark side. West (2003: 40) catalogues these, in particular the suicide attempts and her suffering from Munchausen’s Syndrome. When Diego womanises, Frida is shown to resort to lesbian adventures both in retaliation and to some extent to make him jealous. The scene at Tina Modotti’s party provides a heady mixture of politics and sex. The politics are taken as an essentially male province as the men discuss socialism around the table at one end of the room. The gathering is made more attractive to the women viewers by the placing of Latin heartthrob Antonio Banderas as David Alfaro Siquieros. Frida diverts attention away from the politics by performing an erotic tango with Menotti (played by Ashley Judd) which ends with a kiss.²⁸³ The homoeroticism is intensified by Modotti wearing a revealing dress that leaves her back and most of her upper body uncovered. There is reference to many lesbian affairs in both New York and Paris within the montage sequences, plus an extended seduction of Gracie (Saffron Burrows), an amalgam of several real conquests, in an American diner. On the whole, for Taymor’s *Frida*, these brief affairs are merely diversions, though the lingering on the entwined naked bodies of Frida and Josephine Baker while in Paris, the most explicit sexual scene in the film, begins to suggest there could be a core alternative drive to the heterosexual relationship with Riviera. Here the women’s two glowing naked bodies are not only intertwined but with their different ethnicities provide a doubly exotic scene. This explicitness in a lesbian scene is not carried through to the heterosexual love-scenes, none of which features two fully naked bodies.

Ruiz-Alfaro (2012: 1132) has drawn attention to the subtle deeper queering of the film which would only be immediately obvious to a Latinidad audience. This arises from the presence, as a marginal character, of the Mexican singer Chavela Vargas, a well-known contemporary gay and lesbian icon for Latinos. The character is present in two

283 The tango is, of course, a standard but popular symbol of Latin America and Latino sexuality. Both the dance sequence and its final all female kiss featured prominently in poster campaigns for the film and in the clips shown on promotional television shows (Molina-Guzmán, 2010a: 102).

crucial scenes and two of her songs are on the soundtrack.²⁸⁴ She is portrayed by Lila Downs, the recognised heir to Vargas's musical legacy, who sings Vargas's most famous songs. These are introduced diegetically, with *Alcoba azul* in the tango scene and *La llorona* at Frida's deathbed (Ruiz-Alfaro, 2012: 1137, 1141). For the latter she is disguised as La Pelona, or death in Mexican imaginary. As death she invokes further queering, because she is dressed in masculine attire, as a *charro* or horse rider, with a silver-studded black suit, with her hair pulled back and tied up in a braid, thus accentuating the masculine pose.²⁸⁵ This structure suggests that for Frida her lesbian affairs are very much a part of a performance, just another add-on to her bohemian artistic character. In Leduc's *Frida Naturaleza Vida* casual lesbian affairs feature regularly. Here, Frida's gender role emerges as performative, in the Butlerian sense where gender is not simply something one is, but something one does, via a set of acts which are repeated (Butler, 2006: 25, 33).²⁸⁶ Frida is shown to be very tactile with all her female acquaintances. Even the nurse looking after her falls for Frida's charms and acquiesces to being fondled in a hammock in the hospital grounds.

This balmy scenario is very different to the, albeit fictional, British art world of the noughties depicted in *Boogie Woogie* (2009). To see the ready acceptance of a lesbian lifestyle, one need only follow the career of Elaine (played by Jaime Winstone).²⁸⁷ Indeed, the weakness of the film lies in it suggesting that the novelty and shock value of exhibiting a promiscuous and aggressive lesbian lifestyle is a sufficiently defining element to bring

284 For English speakers and non-specialists any reference to Vargas's importance is hidden away in the special features section of the *Frida* two-disk DVD set where she is interviewed by Elliot Goldenthal, who wrote the musical score for the film (Molina-Guzmán, 2010a: 102).

285 Vargas was Kahlo's lover for five years. In her memoir *Y si quieres saber de mi pasado* (And If You Want to Know About My Past), Madrid: Planeta, 2002, she does not portray Rivera as a rival or source of Frida's constant grief about life. Vargas often stayed with the couple and describes Rivera as being fun and extravagant (Ruiz-Alfaro, 2012: 1143).

286 Butler's (2006: 192) seminal work on gender proposed that "Significantly, if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the appearance of substance (underlining in the original) is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief...That gender reality is created through sustained social performances means that the very notions of an essential sex and a true or abiding masculinity or femininity are also constructed as part of the strategy that conceals gender's performative character and the performance possibilities for proliferating gender configurations outside the restrictive frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality".

287 Among the many *à clef* references, Elaine has been equated with Tracey Emin and the similar tone of Emin's tent compared to Elaine's frank video (Curtis, 2010: 2).

success in an overcrowded field. This seems an outdated concept and a hangover from basing the screenplay on a book written in 2000 and which originally described the New York gallery scene. Here, Elaine's use of a video diary to record the uncensored highlights of a series of lesbian relationships is used as a turn-on for the male audience as well as the female. The director, Duncan Ward, has stated in a Question and Answer session on the film, included on the DVD, that these scenes were "great fun to shoot". The sex is uninhibited and frequent. However, the character's relationships are exposed as either superficial or abusive and bitter. The overarching outlook of all the participants is amoral and self-centred. The ending is deeply unsettling as Elaine continues to film the suicide jump of her former agent Dewey Dalamanatousis (played by Alan Cumming) even after he falls across her car bonnet and she has no interest in saving him. While all lesbian artists are made out to be selfish and amoral, so too are all the other featured characters apart from Dewey.

Turning from such a bleak portrayal of a lesbian lifestyle in *Boogie Woogie*, when looking at *Carrington*, the story of Dora Carrington, the lesbian aspect of her historical record is expunged from the biopic in its entirety but the film still presents a queering of her situation. The screenplay by Christopher Hampton was based on Michael Holroyd's biography of Lytton Strachey, from references in which Hampton developed an interest in Carrington.²⁸⁸ This gives an immediate bias in the film towards the depiction of Strachey with his homosexual leanings and position within the Bloomsbury literary and artistic set in Edwardian London, where polymorphous sexual relationships were accepted as normal.²⁸⁹ Murphy (2000:85) describes Bloomsbury as "a community in which absolutes dissolved and physiological packaging guaranteed nothing, a genuinely queer space where everything was normal." To offset this gay bias, the character of Dora is made intensely heterosexual, desired by three lovers whose names provide the inter-titles for

288 The film became Hampton's directorial debut by default as several experienced directors approached to handle the production were all contracted to other work at the time.

289 Although Hampton himself emerged in adult life as heterosexual, he was well aware of homosexual romance and lust from his schooldays at Lancing College, which formed the basis of his first play *When Did You Last See My Mother?* (1966). His second, *Total Eclipse* (1968), portrayed the destructive relationship between Rimbaud and Verlaine. Hampton had his first serious heterosexual relationship in his second year at Oxford with Joanna Van Heyningen. In an interview with O'Mahony (2001: 1), she said "Most of his experiences before me had been homosexual...So I was quite early on in that sense of things. He was thinking that he was almost certainly heterosexual."

three out of the six chapters into which the film is broken. Her proclivity for wearing men's attire and a page boy haircut is the only recognition of her lesbian tendencies. These are what first attract Strachey to her as he thinks she is a boy. In the depiction of her romance and marriage to Ralph Partridge there is a suggestion that her sexual needs are not being met when the camera lingers on a close-up of her blank face as he makes love to her. However, this disinterest or distaste could be put down to the violent nature of all three male lovers' lovemaking techniques, at least as suggested in the biopic. Male heterosexuality is in fact not depicted in a very favourable light with the rantings and violence of Mark Gertler, the domination and arrogance of Ralph Partridge and the weakness of Gerald Brenan according to Monk (1995: 33). This sits in complete contrast to the gentle nature of her relationship with Strachey. Hampton deliberately leaves open the question of whether this relationship was consummated. When the two of them agree to get into bed together for warmth there is some sexual play as Dora gropes for Lytton's penis under the covers and Lytton's face registers pleasure. However, Murphy (2000: 93) takes the suggestion of sexual activity much further in suggesting Dora's turning over to go to sleep also places her in the correct position for anal intercourse; but this interpretation seems to go too far considering the brevity of the episode and the way in which Dora is shown as settling down to sleep. This odd couple do rapidly distance themselves from the incestuous world of Bloomsbury by moving into the country so continuing an emphasis on their relationship rather than the mores of the Bloomsbury Group as a whole (Macnab, 1995: 46).²⁹⁰

Here, for both Carrington and Strachey, their nature as outsiders to common society comes to the fore. Strachey is a self-acknowledged 'bugger' and a conscientious objector to the Great War. Carrington becomes queered just by remaining in love with him and accepting great limitations and peculiarities within their relationship. She is made out to be even willing to go pimping and to marry Partridge simply to retain Lytton within her small social circle. Lytton neatly sums up the roundabout of relationships when he says "everything at sixes and sevens – ladies in love with buggers and buggers in love with

290 Carrington and Strachey were together for 17 years and she was 13 years his junior.

womanisers."²⁹¹ This gives a queer perspective to its marketing as a heritage film. The usual features of the genre such as country houses, gardens, beautiful landscapes, bicycle rides, vintage cars and steam trains are present but the usual atmosphere of cosy nostalgia gathered around such images is distanced and made edgy by some very explicit dialogue and the depiction of the gay, bisexual and active female heterosexual activities. The depiction of an endlessly evolving set of intricate relationships leaves little room for any interest in Carrington's art. Admittedly her works are often shown lying around the sets or propped up against a wall in the background, but are rarely foregrounded. There is more discussion of Mark Gertler's most famous picture *Merry-go-round* (1916) than of any of Carrington's. It is Gertler who is given the accolade from Strachey of "But the critics... I mean, surely nowadays the papers are full of nothing but Gertler" (Hampton, 1995: 15). She has become an appendage to Strachey's domestic set-up enabling him to concentrate on writing, and loses any status as an artist in her own right while freely accepting this subordinate position. When she brings Strachey his afternoon tea the screenplay directs that "Carrington picks up a penwiper from Lytton's desk. It's made of red and blue felt with ragged edges, and on it, embroidered in green, are the words 'USE ME'. Carrington then says: 'That's how I feel Lytton. You must always remember that. I'm your penwiper'" (Hampton, 1995: 36). Her disinterest in fame and fortune are often mentioned. For example, when Lytton encourages her to take up an offer from the London Group for her to hold an exhibition, she replies "I've told you before, I don't want an exhibition. That isn't why I do it. I paint when I feel well and it makes me feel even better. I'm not interested in selling them. They're for us" (Hampton, 1995: 70). The fact that Carrington is an artist appears in the film to be used as a means of imparting a suitably bohemian atmosphere, and her painting could be interchangeable with any other form of creative work or even with nothing at all as she had a private income. Any sense of her being driven by a creative urge is continually offset by her life coming back to revolving around Strachey.

291 This quote, used in the film, was actually taken from a letter from Strachey to Carrington in 1919. It is quoted in full in Gerzina (1989: 148-149). In this context: Carrington (the lady), is in love with Strachey (the bugger), in love with Ralph Partridge (the womaniser and husband of Carrington).

In Carrington, just as Dora can be regarded as a female artist of 'outsider' status and with a close connection to a gay community, a similar situation is also at the heart of *Séraphine*. While this time there is no hint of a sexual relationship implied between the naïve artist Séraphine de Senlis and her gay patron the art dealer and collector Wilhelm Uhde, there is a respect for each other and a bond which brings strength to them both. Séraphine is an outsider within her local community by temperament, mental impairment and social class, and unusually for a female artist biopic, is not portrayed as being stereotypically attractive, being comparatively old and has obviously never epitomised youth and beauty. Uhde is kept apart by his homosexuality, leading him to prefer to hide away in the French countryside rather than live in Paris. Unlike Carrington, Séraphine is never a formal part of this aspect of his life, and would appear to remain in ignorance of his true nature.²⁹² He moved temporarily to Senlis in 1913 when he needed to get out of Paris for a while. When he returns to Chantilly after the First World War in 1924 he is accompanied by his life-partner Helmut Kollé whom he first met in 1918. Kollé's physical decline due to endocarditis is depicted in the film as are the couple's considerable efforts to maintain a façade of purely professional artistic partnership, hiding their true sexual relationship from even their regular servants. Only Uhde's sister is fully aware of their loving relationship. Séraphine's queering is thus by association rather than a personal sexual inclination, and it adds another layer to the complex mixture of her very personal form of art, her hearing voices and her outsider status in the local community. From the presence of the female artist within a gay milieu, in the next chapter we look at the representation of the gay artist himself.

Chapter 5.6. Conclusion.

Overall, what is important in female artist biopics is that they have continued the task begun in art history, and given women artists such as Frida Kahlo, Camille Claudel and Lee Krasner "Free[dom] from the shadow of their spouses, teachers, lovers and

²⁹² In real life Uhde tried to hide his sexual preference behind a marriage of convenience to Sonia Terk in 1908, and whom he subsequently divorced in 1910. Sonia went on to marry the painter Robert Delaunay in 1910 and they co-founded the Orphism Movement, noted for its use of strong colours and geometric shapes, in 1912.

mentors...often dismantling earlier stereotypes, no longer just disciples or imitations of 'great men'" (Chadwick, 1993a: 8). Not only is a life and work of their own restored to most of them, the artistic output is shown to be of an importance in itself and deserving of a place in the artistic canon. They are no longer invisible in genre terms as the films have moved beyond the cliché tropes of dependence on a mentor and subsequent victimisation and humiliation, to offer a subtle and often contradictory pattern of behaviour, resulting in a depth of character as well as new insights into their work. Part of this return to visibility lies in the open depiction of a variety of sexual activity, which while providing a strong controversial element also gives a solidity to the women's screen presence. Where these aspects are obscured, as in *Carrington*, then the portrayal of the work of the female artist is also given a rank of second place within the film. The two major films directed by women play on romantic melodrama which induces a great ambiguity towards their treatment as feminist icons and has to some extent aroused the dismay of the feminist movement. It is in the male directed *Frida Naturaleza Vida* that the most rounded portrait of a female artist is found. This film succeeds by largely replacing dialogue with Mexican folksongs which comment on the on-screen situation and using the camera to take a very slow lingering look, so immersing the audience in the everyday habits and surroundings of the artist.

Chapter 6. The gay artist biopic

This chapter continues the investigation on gender and sexuality within artist biopics begun in Chapter four, moving on from looking at female to male artists. Here, *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, about Michelangelo, can be considered as the forerunner of many films based on the lives of gay artists. Indeed, there have been enough to consider the gay artist biopic is a sub-genre in its own right.²⁹³ This chapter will outline its characteristics, assembled from an analysis of *A Bigger Splash*, about David Hockney; *Caravaggio* (1986) and *Caravaggio* (Italy, France/Germany/Spain, Angelo Longoni, 2007); *Postcards From America* (UK/USA, Steve McLean, 1994), about David Wojnarowicz; *Love is the Devil*, about Francis Bacon; *Dalí* (Spain/Bulgaria/Italy, Antoni Ribas, 1991) and also *Little Ashes*, about Salvador Dalí; and three films featuring Andy Warhol, *I Shot Andy Warhol* (UK/USA, Mary Harron, 1995), *Basquiat* (USA, Julian Schnabel, 1996), and *Factory Girl*.

Chapter 6.1. The gay artist as victim.

Already distinct tropes have begun to emerge in this relatively new field, in particular the downward trajectory and intense suffering and victimisation more usually associated with the female biopic. As stated at the beginning of Chapter 5, Bingham (2010: 10, 213-220) in his recent history of the biopic asserts that male and female biopics are distinct genres and divides his book accordingly. While for the male, the Great Man or the Wild Genius can succeed against all odds to make his mark in his chosen field and improve the quality of society, for the female, any public success is only gained at a very high price after experiencing suffering, victimisation and failure. However, the queer artist has tended to follow a path nearer to the female stereotype than to the Great Man scenario, in that his/her eventual success comes at a high emotional price.²⁹⁴ Nonetheless

293 Parts of this chapter have been published as Bovey, David (2012) "'Sex doesn't dominate my life at all, really. I think painting does" (David Hockney): the emergence of the queer artist biopic', *Networking Knowledge: Journal of the MeCCSA –PGN*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 17pp.

<http://ojs.meccsa.org.uk/index.php/netknow/article/view/287/129> Accessed 24/12/2012 and included in the Publications section of the thesis pp.373-390.

294 Dyer (1993a: 75) takes such discussion beyond the cinema for the gay component of a queer image. He sees the stereotype of the image of the homosexual as a sad young man, made sad by the short-

it is a less steep downward trajectory compared to the female in that he remains sane and does not have to be locked away.

This attitude pervades the gay subject, for example, during *A Bigger Splash*, Hockney spirals into a deeper and deeper depression over the loss of his lover, Peter Schlesinger. After suffering a creative block, his recovery in putting together his recent work for a successful gallery exhibition in New York, is overshadowed by the ending, where he is so disillusioned that he disappears without contacting his friends in New York. In *Little Ashes*, Dalí runs off to Paris to escape his feelings towards Federico García Lorca. This leads to the monetary success and fame he craved, but his reunion with Lorca eight years later makes plain that such trappings have not really compensated for his loss of Lorca and that his wife Gala only partially appeases his sexual desires. The unsuitability of such a liaison, made hopeless by Dalí's phobia of being touched, is mirrored in the intense homophobia exhibited on several occasions by the third famous persona in the student triumvirate, filmmaker Luis Buñuel, including his serious attack on a man cruising in the park at night.

The development of specific tropes, however, does not imply a standardised and predictable end product, owing to various influences that will be considered here. The interpretation of these tropes can be very varied allowing a queer artist's story to be told as it were in a queer voice. To take one very common thread: the rite of the young impecunious gay artist experiencing a period of promiscuous rent-boy activity before reaching sexual maturity has been handled in very contrasting ways. This can be shown by comparing the treatment of sexual hustling by a teenage Caravaggio in Renaissance Italy in Jarman's 1986 film version against that of the twentieth-century American artist David Wojnarowicz in *Postcards From America*. David's rape by the driver of a pick-up truck giving him a lift in the desert is the lowest point within the downward trajectory of the film, and it has a horrifying inevitability. David's first words to the driver – "How far are you going?" – echo with double entendre. Wojnarowicz has already suffered nearly two

term nature of the majority of gay relationships, a lack of children and a fierce social opprobrium, as being visible across the gay literature of the UK and the USA from the 1940s to 1960s, in plays, dance, song and in both high and low culture.

decades of abuse from both his father and strangers. The audience knows that this new episode will also end in disaster, especially if they have seen any of those Hollywood movies where it is always dangerous to accept motor rides involving complete strangers out in the middle of nowhere, such as *The Hitcher* (Robert Harmon, 1986)²⁹⁵. The *Postcards* director, Steve McLean, implies it is a rite of passage, a major step on Wojnarowicz's way of realising that he must alter his life style to ensure his survival. It is a very chilling rather than celebratory sequence.

The rape is depicted realistically, repulsively even, as the fear and violence are emphasised by the careful use of darkness and shadow and a lack of colour. The truck curtains are a pale brown: the driver's shirt is dark blue; David's leather jacket is black; the truck is black; the only light comes from the dimmed headlights of the parked vehicle. During the assault there is a reliance on a hand-held camera continuously on the move, providing close-ups to show the claustrophobic nature of the event. The combination of muted colour and the disorientation of movement linked with close-ups imposes a degree of objectivity to what is happening on the screen, enabling the sequence to be bearable to watch at all. McLean also invokes a worrying ambiguity to the episode, as to whether David has provoked and/or enjoyed the encounter. By the cutting of the soundtrack and only partial visibility of David's head his cries can be heard as a mixture of both pleasure and pain. Similarly, in the sequence that follows David walks fully clothed into a lake at dawn. This is because he is obviously hot and dirty after his night adventure, but as he is fully clothed it suggests more than a simple need to bathe, it also becomes a form of holy cleansing and a baptism, a part of his trying to expunge a distressing episode from his memory and start life refreshed in the hope of a better life to come.

There is a great contrast between Wojnarowicz's experience and Jarman's treatment of Caravaggio's early life as a hustler.²⁹⁶ An elderly man approaches the teenage Caravaggio who is painting in a street in Rome. There is gentle humour at work

295 The film gained cult status and was so popular it warranted a sequel, *The Hitcher 2: I've Been Waiting* (Louis Morneau, 2003), which went straight to video, and also a remake, *The Hitcher* (Dave Myers, 2007) with Sean Bean replacing Rutger Hauer as the murderous passenger.

296 Simpson (1994: 154) defines a 'hustler' as "a straight boy living by offering his body to gay men, taking this as affirmation of his heterosexuality".

here as a completed version of *Still Life with a Basket of Fruit* (c1599) lies casually displayed on the steps nearby. The two males have a conversation full of double-entendres and amusing knowing looks which leads up to Caravaggio showing his split trousers and the client accepting Caravaggio's offer of a sexual encounter. Caravaggio is being watched over by a pimp who nods his agreement to the deal. We next see the couple in Caravaggio's room post-coition. They are engaged in very physical horseplay which ends with Caravaggio drawing a knife on the elderly client and taking his wallet before the man runs hastily out of the room in fright. Caravaggio flops onto his bed and, highly satisfied with himself, contemplates his easily earned gains.

This basically sordid transaction is transformed by Jarman's *mise-en-scene*. The exterior street is an intoxicating mixture of vibrant colour and sounds. It is dappled in the warm sunny glow of orange and pastel green, brightly lit, and accompanied by sounds recorded in a modern Italian street.²⁹⁷ As the scene cuts to the interior of Caravaggio's lodgings a bright and loud folk dance is on the soundtrack and Caravaggio and his client play a game of chase in a circle. Caravaggio passes a bottle of wine from hand to hand in time to the music which grows faster and faster. The use of a revolving camera varying the depth of focus as well as offering shots in unstable angles makes the encounter appear as a merry dance. The mood abruptly changes when the music finishes. Caravaggio draws a knife from under his pillow but his menace is muted by his comic dialogue. When left on his own he gradually transforms himself into a pose reminiscent of a mixture of Caravaggio's *Bacchus* (1595) and *Boy With a Basket of Fruit* (1593) via knowingly donning a crown of laurel and picking up a basket of fruit (Jarman, 1986: 21). At the same time, on the soundtrack the older Caravaggio intones his considered view of his lifestyle at this early point in his life, so giving credence that the young reprobate just shown is capable of being transformed into the serious painter that is yet to come.²⁹⁸

297 The sounds were recorded in Pitigliano, in the province of Grosseto in Tuscany, Italy (Jarman, 1986: 94).

298 Caravaggio says, "I built the world as Divine Mystery and found the god in the wine, and took him to my heart. I painted myself as Bacchus and took on his fate, a wild orgiastic dismemberment. I raise this fragile glass and drink to you, my audience. Man's character is his fate" (Jarman, 1986: 27).

Via these diversions Jarman succeeds in turning Caravaggio's offering himself for rough trade into part of a sentimental education rather than a matter of crude physical abuse such as that suffered by the similarly aged David Wojnarowicz. The edgy filtering of sexual experience also owes a debt to the way criminal and writer Jean Genet projected his life experiences (Gardner, 1996: 39-40). All is kept light and joyous despite the potentially licentious content.²⁹⁹ There is a safety in the studio sets rather than the social realism of *Postcards From America*. The pimp may carry a knife but is using it to cut juicy fruit, presaging the discharge of bodily fluids to come. The client is elderly and therefore easily controlled. He is also made a figure of fun by being shown with his trousers down around his ankles and befuddled by wine. The jaunty soundtrack music is uplifting and deliberately upbeat. The rapid movements of the revolving camera avoids the potential for a salacious voyeuristic scene as the spectator fails to identify with either Caravaggio's or the client's point of view. Caravaggio's body is not held within the frame which reduces the potential for it to be seen as an erotic spectacle, and also avoids the fetishisation of Caravaggio as a piece of 'rough trade'. The slight frisson of danger that is allowed is quickly defused. Caravaggio has a knife hidden under his pillow. The mere showing of it is enough to extract the client's wallet without further ado. The fun continues. Caravaggio shouts out, firstly in Italian, then: "In plain English, mate, I'm an art object and very, very expensive". At this stage in his life Caravaggio's street-wise tough masculinity is straight identified (Richardson, 2005: 42-43). The sale of his body is a safe fantasy that is essential to forming what Jarman has described, based on his reading of the artist's paintings, as "the most homosexual of painters" as an adult.

²⁹⁹ The mood also owes much to the casting of Dexter Fletcher as the young Caravaggio, playing the street-wise cockney, which was to become his stock-in-trade. Fletcher was already a little too old for this part, but Jarman was probably protecting himself from censorship battles in the same way he used Dawn Archibald's gymnastic female angel rather than a naked boy to evoke Caravaggio's painting of Cupid, *Amor Vincit Omnia* (Jarman, 1986: 75).

Chapter 6.2. The gay artist and 'rough trade'.

Another variation on this trope of hustling continues with the adult queer artist chasing the classic gay cliché of the attraction of the gay artist to 'rough trade'.³⁰⁰ This is depicted most powerfully in *Love is the Devil* and more equivocally in Jarman's *Caravaggio*. In the former the working class George Dyer from London's East End becomes the lover and muse to Francis Bacon and it is their relationship, rather than Bacon's painting, which is at the heart of the film and which prompted John Maybury to accept its directorship (Weston, 1998: 38). In a pivotal sequence, when the two men prepare for a sadomasochistic sexual encounter, they proceed as if participating in an ancient ritual. It is enacted in a severely formal style. Each item of clothing is removed in strict order and placed meticulously in its designated place in the bedroom, so each detail is eroticised (Kalin, 1998: 62). At the same time the procedure exhibits the accoutrements of the well-dressed British man circa 1967. They appear to be concentrating on getting this procedure just right. The pair are completely silent but Maybury magnifies the sound of each of their movements so the rustle of clothes or the jingle of cuff-links begin to form a kind of solemn musical accompaniment while at the same time providing a Brechtian distancing effect. The audience is continually reminded that they are merely watching play-acting which helps make the depiction of a potentially repellent scene bearable. This cacophony of preparation culminates in George wrapping his belt slowly, taut around his hand, snapping leather against leather. The scene ends with Bacon kneeling by the bed as Dyer walks towards his bare back with a lit cigarette, which crackles. Finally Dyer breaks the silence, with the powerfully moving word "Sorry" as the image fades to black.

Jarman, however, depicts an unfulfilled passion, which while based initially on a rough trade attraction is immersed in ambiguity. *Caravaggio* never achieves a gay romance with the criminal Ranuccio Thomasoni.³⁰¹ The desire between the painter and

300 Macnab (1997: 20) has noted that "up until recently, there was a strange camaraderie between the upper classes and lower classes which excluded the middle classes, certainly in homosexual culture". The prominence of this sub-cultural myth within gay literature is summarised in Sinfield (1998: 95-99).

301 As Jarman (1984: 22) has described in one of his published diaries, "Michelle [i.e. Caravaggio] gazes wistfully at the hero slaying the saint [with Thomasoni modelling the role]. It is a look no one can understand unless he has stood till 5.00 am in a gay bar hoping to be fucked by that hero. The gaze of the passive homosexual at the object of his desire, he waits to be chosen, he cannot make the choice". The

his model is plainly there, but circumstances see it ended prematurely. Nevertheless, Ranuccio's stabbing of Caravaggio can be seen as an act equating to a sexual pleasure, while the feeding by mouth of gold coins between the artist and Ranuccio is also sexually charged. The fluidity of the combinations of sexual boundaries between the three leading characters provides a multiplicity of queer readings. The relationship collapses in violence, as the two men's sexual roles appear to change. As the hitherto 'straight' Ranuccio confesses he has murdered his former mistress Lena out of love for Caravaggio, so Caravaggio slits Ranuccio's throat for foreclosing on his hitherto unacknowledged adult heterosexual attraction to, and artistic inspiration found in, Lena.³⁰²

Chapter 6.3. The gay artist's lifestyle.

In the development of their tropes nearly all the gay artist biopics only deal with a partial life of the artist, not a 'cradle to grave' structuring. The focus on short time periods promotes a concentration on the artist's personal relationships amid a search for a specific catalyst to provide a key to the flowering of the artist's creative genius at a particular time. The only film taking the whole life, Longoni's *Caravaggio*, was made with a long version for television screening as well as theatrical distribution in mind. The rest of the films choose to explore their chosen themes in depth. For example, *The Agony and the Ecstasy* was only interested in the period 1508-1512 when Michelangelo was sparring with Pope Julius II over the decoration of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. In *A Bigger Splash* the breakup of Hockney's relationship with Peter Schlesinger and the consequent fall-out covers three years from 1969. In *Love is the Devil* we can follow Bacon's relationship with George Dyer over eight years. *Postcards from America* only shows David Wojnarowicz from the age of ten to about twenty. It is a palimpsest equivalent to a set of

earliest versions of the screenplay placed the Carravaggio/Thomasoni gay romance more centrally in the film. Ellis (2009: 115) rightly points out that the shift away from this means that "Instead we have a more severe and psychologically complex narrative about self-hatred and self-delusion, masochistic attachment and the painful necessity of certain renunciations and acceptances".

302 Ellis (2009: 125-127) argues, rather unconvincingly, against this conventional view. His case for suggesting that Thomasoni never displays any homosexual inclinations rests on his interpretation of Ranuccio's saying "I did it for you- for love" as merely a piece of rent boy bravado and flattering Caravaggio to extort even more money. He has really murdered Lena out of possessiveness and sexual jealousy, not to be nearer Caravaggio as Lena is already newly set up with Cardinal Scipione so leaving Caravaggio and Thomasoni on their own.

postcard notes sent over the ten year period as it is based on Wojnarowicz's series of impressionistic short essays, including that with the film title, published in *Close to the Knives* (1992). While Jarman's *Caravaggio* shows him from a boy to his death, the artist's life is incomplete and patchy, only selecting one or two moments of particular importance to either his artistic or emotional development, as it concentrates on his period in Rome and omits his Maltese adventures entirely.³⁰³ Morrison's *Little Ashes* for two-thirds of its running time focuses on the relationship of Dalí, Lorca and Buñuel at University in Madrid in 1922-1925. Even the three Warhol films each take a different time-frame to look at his fame, with *Factory Girl* showing his attraction to Edie Sedgwick in 1965-1966 at the same time he was switching from painting to filmmaking. *I Shot Andy Warhol* builds up to Valerie Solanus's shootout in 1968, and *Basquiat* deals with his art and friendships after Warhol's recovery from his serious injuries.

Within the gay artist biopic there is a generally aggressive attitude around a frank and even 'in your face' sexuality. Only in the two European biopics, *Caravaggio* (2007) and *Dalí*, is the element of homosexuality very marginal or equivocal. In the rest of these films homosexuality is dealt with as a central issue and it is accepted as an everyday element within the section of society portrayed. This was not there, however, in the beginning in 1965 in *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, where there is a careful avoidance of the question of Michelangelo's sexual preference. This is not surprising considering the film was a huge blockbuster with a budget of ten million dollars and a cast of thousands and such high investment meant the studio wanted to play safe and avoid any controversial aspects of Michelangelo's life (Moss, 1987: 245-246). Carol Reed attempts to bring in some love interest with Contessina di Medici (Diane Cilento) nursing Michelangelo (Charlton Heston) when he has a physical breakdown but the script even leaves this uncertain. It is as if the unspoken suggestion of his homosexuality is very much present, making the attempt at tender romance bloodless.³⁰⁴ There is a brief reference to the

303 Like Wojnarowicz, Jarman's series of autobiographical writings were very unconventional. They blended, also often in a deliberately provocative manner, personal history, family mythology, social history, his diary and much artistic reflection (Ellis, 2009: 91).

304 His disinterest in the opposite sex is laid firmly at his being wedded to his art. That mistress demands all his time. The script says "Maybe God has crippled me, with a purpose, as he does often...He gave me the power to create. I'm filled with love, but of a different kind", which is re-emphasised at the end

situation at Michelangelo's sickbed. When asked by the Contessina why he refuses to have an affair with her, his eyes cast around the studio and alight on the drawing of a naked man and Michelangelo says, "It's not that either".³⁰⁵

By 1974, with *A Bigger Splash* there explodes a sexually explicit exploration of the gay lifestyle in 1960's London. This is given enhanced shock appeal because at the time it was thought to be very much a cinema verité record documenting David Hockney and his entourage, whereas in fact it was scripted and carefully edited to tell a semi-fictional story (Bovey 2011: 375, 377-378). In retrospect it was a landmark film in gay cinema, if only because, as Collinson (1975: 37), writing in the gay magazine *Quorum*, considered that despite its pretentiousness "it makes no attempt to explain or to depreciate or defend its characters' gayness: this acceptance of gayness is so rare in films and plays".

This openness and a direct style were to become a hallmark of the subsequent British films – *Caravaggio*, *Postcards from America* and *Love is the Devil*. These are all low budget independent art-house films where greater risks can be taken, or indeed are expected. However, even for these money was not easy to raise and production was difficult (Bovey, 2010: 2). For example, Jack Hazan mortgaged his house as well as pursuing a full-time job while making *A Bigger Splash*. He had to fit filming around both his own work commitments and what suited the Hockney entourage. He aimed for two or three days a week filming, but Hockney soon got fed-up with the invasion of his privacy. It was only after Hazan found him special lights so he could work all night while preparing his paintings for show right up to the last minute, that he felt that in return he owed

of the film when the Contessina's reaction on viewing the completed ceiling is, "There's more love here than could ever exist between man and woman".

305 While I argue here that a discussion of a queer lifestyle is generally quite open in the gay artist biopic, the older, more discreet, attitudes do live on. For example, in *Caravaggio* (2007), which was envisaged as a 200 minute television production for potential family audiences, as well as a 130 minute theatrical version, there are only veiled references to the painter's bisexuality. When a painting of Bacchus, modelled by Caravaggio's closest 'friend' Mario Mimiti, lies next to Caravaggio's hospital bed, a wounded soldier, Onorio Longhi, in the next bed asks "Who's that lady?" Caravaggio replies "A friend" and Onorio sums up the unspoken implications with "Better a pederast than a Spaniard". Again, in *Dalí* (1991) the matter of Dalí's relationship with Federico Lorca is raised only once for it to be quickly dismissed. The script paraphrases a quote from an interview with Alain Bosquet (1969: 19-20), with Dalí saying in voiceover, "When Lorca tried to seduce me, I was repulsed. I'm not a homosexual. The fact that the greatest Spanish poet desired my divine arse wasn't that bad. Anyone would have liked it".

Hazan special access to complete filming, especially the right to film him actually painting (Bovey, 2011: 378).

For others access to the artist's work was also difficult. For example, the Bacon estate would not co-operate with John Maybury making *Love is the Devil*, and refused all permissions to reproduce Bacon's works. It also went further and insisted on prohibiting the use of any of Bacon's interviews, so Maybury had to make up his own style of Bacon's speech. He was so successful that it was thought to be real quotes, even by Bacon's closest friends (Bovey, 2010: 5). Such difficulties proved to be artistically stimulating as the directors were forced to refine their approach to the biopic.³⁰⁶ For other films it helped to have a sympathetic producer. For example Christine Vachon (1998: 127) recognised the special dangers and possibilities of working in the low-budget independent sector, producing both *Postcards from America* and *I Shot Andy Warhol*. She made use of Strand Releasing, a supportive specialist distributor, to make the most of the market via an intense public relations exercise on the gay press, and a commercial advertising campaign based on the basic appeal level of a bare-chested James Lyons on posters (Vachon, 1998: 292-293). There was no attempt to tie the film in with the other side of Wojnarowicz's activities, his campaigning against public and governmental indifference to AIDS or the fact that his main work was by its locational specificity and ephemeral nature, displayed outside the confines of an art gallery (Cooper, 1996: 17).

Necessity became the mother of invention when budgets were constricted and access to sources denied. With a small budget from Channel 4, Derek Jarman was forced to make *Caravaggio* in an old warehouse cheaply converted into the shoddy Limehouse Studios. Rather than going location shooting he used sound recordings made at the site of Caravaggio's wanderings in Italy to introduce a Mediterranean ambiance to his enclosed studio sets. Even these were pared down to the bone, as Cardinal de Monte's art gallery is represented by a single bust on a plinth, the rest of his visible objects being under

306 Although generally supportive of Maybury, the BBC did insist on censoring one minute from the film. A fourteen year old actor, playing the teenage Bacon, appeared to be involved in a sex scene in his father's stables. This removed the only reference in the film to Bacon's life outside the years of his relationship with George Dyer ('Bacon sliced', 1997: 1).

dustcovers (Peake, 1999: 351). To simulate the sheen of a marble palace floor the studio floor was soaked with water that reflected the studio lights. The paintings were reproduced as tableaux, permitting Jarman to add-in his own idiosyncratic details. Indeed, not only Caravaggio's work is invoked, for example, the scene of the critic Giovanni Baglione typing in his bath is a pastiche of David's *The Death of Marat* (Ellis, 2009: 119). The many anachronisms in the film emphasise Jarman's disdain for the Hollywood blockbuster tradition of exact replication of accurate detail.

For John Maybury, the denial of reproduction of either Bacon's work or interviews led him to find a way to invoke the spirit of Bacon's work without infringing any copyright. In association with his regular cameraman John Mathieson and production designer Alan Macdonald, he was able to build on his experience of working on pop promos and cutting edge video techniques, to create within the camera, as well as a few sequences of CGI, how Bacon saw the world through his paintings. There are many shots filmed using special lenses that deliberately distort the character's features, making them appear grotesque. This effect is doubly effective when accompanied by shooting the scenes from low down and pointing the camera upwards, just as in the trademark style of Bacon's drinking companion, the photographer John Deakin. Shooting through glass was also used to create distortion, and a restricted colour palette reflected the limited colour range used in Bacon's paintings (Willis, 1998: 48-51). This meant particular use of old-fashioned techniques such as double exposure within the camera, the use of a boroscope and a variety of coloured gels. Sets were largely lit by bare light bulbs, echoing their use in Bacon's paintings and in his studio. Maybury did consider it important to shoot on location in certain instances to get the correct atmosphere. For example, he used the St. John restaurant in the East-End of London, used by the then current YBAs (Young British Artists), rather than Wheeler's Restaurant regularly frequented by the Bacon ensemble. He went further than this by calling on favours owed from the YBAs to use these artists as extras within crucial scenes, which emphasised the continuity of the drinking culture and the artists debts to Bacon (Del Re, 1998: 77).

For McLean, directing *Postcards From America*, his mixing of time periods, resulting in a very complex narrative structure, was made simpler for the audience by

using three actors to play David Wojnarowicz, with Olmo Tighe as a child, his brother Michael as a teenager, and James Lyons in his early 20s. Each period of David's life is also represented differently. His childhood features sparse sets, usually set up in the round surrounded by darkness, at once moody and frightening, accompanied by unsettling rumbling noise, equating to the anger about to spill out of his father. For the teenage years the view is often surreal and alternative scenarios illustrated, while the young adult is enmeshed in a hot desert environment where it is an effort to even speak.

Chapter 6.4. The arrival of a queer cinema.

The arrival of the queer artist biopic needs to be seen within the wider context of the development of a queer cinema and how its depiction of minority sexual and gender categories challenges both general public tolerances and the current state of censorship. *A Bigger Splash* was exceptional in appearing at a time when mainstream studio fare was still only using stereotypical gay characters. The British independent sector was tuned into an increasingly realistic depiction of gay life at least for a niche audience. Jarman's *Sebastiane* (1976) was able to go further on the back of *A Bigger Splash*'s censorship battles, but had to retreat to an historical Roman time period. However, this film was quickly followed by Ron Peck's *Nighthawks* (1978), which did show the contemporary gay life of a London schoolteacher, including the frequenting of West End clubs such as *Heaven*. The appearance of a relatively large number of films with a queer theme in the 1990s, particularly in the United States, can be seen as part of what B. Ruby Rich (1992: 32) christened the 'New Queer Cinema'.³⁰⁷ Whereas more classical gay and lesbian films had used conventional narrative structures to present 'positive images', this was an outpouring of queer independent films that Benschhoff, (2006: 220) has described as being "increasingly edgy, angry, and theoretically rigorous. These works were unapologetic in their frank look at sexuality and combined stylistic elements drawn from AIDS activist videos, avant-garde cinemas, and even Hollywood films". Rich (1992: 30) labelled their style as 'homo pomo' (Homosexual Post-Modernism). *Love is the Devil* and *Postcards From America* show the characteristics of this categorisation in exchanging the positive

307 The films by younger filmmakers included *Poison* (Todd Haynes, 1991), *The Living End* (Gregg Araki, 1992), *Swoon* (Tom Kalin, 1992), and *Paris is Burning* (Jennie Living, 1990).

representation of gays in favour of “the gritty and sometimes seamy reality of gay subculture” (Juett, 2010b: x). However, by the turn of the century Rich (2000: 22) saw such an outpouring as becoming “a moment rather than a movement”, with new material, as in *Factory Girl* or *Little Ashes*, itself becoming both clichéd and also absorbed through a broader appeal into the mainstream owing to their more comfortable conciliatory approach to characters and stories.

Criticism of the tendency towards frankness in the queer artist biopic came not only from more conservative sections of society generally, but also from some in artistic circles that one might have supposed would be more in sympathy to the recognition of revised definitions of gender and sexuality. For example, on the release of *Love is the Devil* John Maybury has commented that “I was shocked by the response I got from the cultural establishment” (quoted in Buck, 1998: 6). “They’ve asked me to remove facts because *they* were offended” (quoted in Macnab, 1997: 19). Maybury was particularly incensed at the intervention of Lord Gowrie as Chairman of the Arts Council who suggested to the Board of the Council that they should not fund the film (Davies, 1997). Maybury found that he “came up against resistance from the art establishment in this country... all basically said ‘This film is not going to be made’. It was extraordinary to have these people ganging up against something which at the time was such a small thing” (quoted in Kalin, 1998: 61).

Looking at the long term, Richards (1997: 18) has traced a British cultural revolution back to the affluence, full employment and materialism of the 1950s and 1960s, so that gradually,

“the rebel and the deviant became heroes, the self was exalted, spontaneity was encouraged and rules, restrictions, conventions and traditions in both life and art were ditched. The old structure, old values and old certainties (notably the doctrine of respectability) were increasingly derided and rejected...Violence, profanity and sexuality, hitherto rigorously suppressed, became prominent both in high culture and low”.

In this regard, Dyer (2002: 205) has pointed out how wider acceptance of gay culture and lifestyle resulted in heritage cinema being “truly hospitable to homosexual subject matter”, where the historical context made it palatable to a wider audience. When

depicting contemporary situations there was much less tolerance. The fact is that for much of the period dealt with in artist biopics, there existed a homosexual rather than a gay culture, as in the UK homosexual acts were illegal and imprisonable offences (Macnab, 1997: 20). It was the *Sexual Offences Act 1967* which decriminalised homosexual acts in private between two men, both of whom had to have attained the age of twenty-one, but this only applied in England and Wales.³⁰⁸

Chapter 6.5. The reception of the gay artist biopic.

A Bigger Splash was originally given the honour of opening the 1973 London Film Festival after receiving favourable reviews at its premiere in the Critics Week at the Cannes Film Festival. However, Keith Lucas, the Chair of the organisers, the British Film Institute, very publicly withdrew the invitation after viewing the film, on the grounds that it would offend the many dignitaries from London councils invited to the opening night (Ryman, 1975: 14). After much negotiation it was awarded the consolation prize of being the closing film for the Festival (Richmond, 1975: 7). The subject matter of a world renowned artist together with high art was also insufficient to avoid the attention of the American customs when a copy of the film was sent to the New York Film Festival. The Department of Customs and Excise denounced it as “disgusting and immoral” and at first limited it to a single showing (Webb, 1988: 144). The resulting publicity led to a sell-out and further showings were negotiated. Similar problems arose in France where the film was intended to open in Paris at the same time that the Musée Des Arts Décoratifs, Palais du Louvre was showing a Hockney retrospective. The French censors held up the film for three months and it was only the personal intervention of the Minister of Culture that gained its release (Ryman, 1975: 14). The film proved so popular that in both London and Paris it ran for several months, with the highest weekly gross of any cinema in London for the first three weeks, but with the compromise of a couple of minutes of cuts for British audiences (Hazan, 2006: Section on ‘Grosses’).

308 Scotland followed in 1980 and Northern Ireland in 1982. Legislation did not cover members of the Merchant Navy or Armed Forces. The age of consent was gradually reduced, to 18 in 1994 and 16 in 2000, thus putting it on a par with heterosexual behaviours. Civil Partnerships were granted under the *Civil Partnership Act 2004*, giving same-sex couples rights and responsibilities identical to civil marriage (Cook, 2007a: 185, 211-212).

For *Love is the Devil*, the opposition of the great and the good also gave the film publicity it would otherwise never have achieved (Davies, 1997). There was also a running battle between Maybury and the well-known *Evening Standard* film critic Alexander Walker that became very personal. Walker's vituperation recalled the fire and brimstone orations of earlier centuries.³⁰⁹ Films on queer artists suffer from approbation conferred without the detractors necessarily having even viewed the work. They are very easily associated with an unsavoury image. *Postcards from America* was briefly lifted from obscurity in 2002 because of a legal action by the singer Connie Francis who objected to the use of four of her songs on the soundtrack. She described the film as "vile and "pornographic" and sued Universal Music Corporation for forty million dollars (Connie, 2002: 1).

A large part of this opprobrium is caused by the link between the representation of the queer and political activism. This is on the part of both the director and the subject of the film for Jarman and Maybury. For Steve McLean's *Postcards* it is more the subject that is the problem. Both Derek Jarman and David Wojnarowicz were in the forefront of the battle for gay rights and a more supportive government response to the Aids epidemic on their respective sides of the Atlantic. They both felt oppressed in the way society treated them and attempted to make their points very vocally, producing diaries, notebooks, works of art and interviews at a punishing rate to keep the problems in the public eye. Jarman's *Caravaggio* can be seen as part of the gay response to appropriate iconic figures of the past and reincorporate them into history that had previously ignored their gay presence, in a similar fashion to feminists rediscovering the forgotten female artists of the past as reported in Chapter 5. In turn, the example of the past proves relevant to the situation in the present. Both films take on a resonance because of the celebrity of director and/ or subject. While *Caravaggio* is a hymn to the artist as well as

309 For examples of Walker's articles see the *London Evening Standard*, on 08/05/1998, Page 19, 'Beef cake but no Bacon'; 14/05/1998, Page 47, 'The Devil of a misdirection'; 17/05/1998, Page 22, 'Blank portrait of an artist'. The latter included a description of the film as "John Maybury's porno-biography of Francis Bacon" and Walker castigates both the Arts Council and the BBC because "Both bodies have a cultural and educational remit that takes priority; they should not be patrons in a porn show". (The articles are included in the BFI Library Press Cuttings Collection).

politics, *Postcards* becomes a strong political statement as it recreates the tragic life of Wojnarowicz before he is rescued from abuse and prostitution. There is no direct reference to his later maturation into a famous artist.³¹⁰ In two kitchen scenes, when he is in his early twenties, there are a bundle of artist's paintbrushes in the sink. One of his clients sees he has an eye for artwork and gives him some very basic hints on how to view a painting hanging in his house. However, this is counterbalanced by the man's obvious impatience to take David to bed and David imagining bludgeoning the man to death with a handy statue before he leaves, despite the client's friendly disposition.

For Hockney, Bacon and Warhol the queer nature of their artistic production was unacknowledged in the art world for a long period. For Bacon and Hockney there was complicity on their part within this situation. As Lucie-Smith (1979: 7) suggests, Bacon's paintings hint at a homosexual context without ever being quite specific about it. It was acceptable because of its ambiguity. Even the most specific, *Two Men on a Bed* of 1953, can be given the benefit of the doubt as it was based on a photograph of two naked athletes by Victorian photographer Eadweard Muybridge. For Hockney, while his early works may jocularly refer to homosexual stereotypes, such as *Doll Boy* (1960), they are never erotic, while his later mid 1960s more explicit illustrations to accompany Cafavy's poems, can shelter behind the act of merely interpreting a set text, rather than expressing his own sentiments. Cooper (1996: 23-24) points out there was also the lack of an adequate language to describe such works, with critics falling back on a formal discussion of form – use of colour, historical precedents- and ignoring the issues surrounding the life of the artist. For Bacon's work this was especially problematic as so much of it was self-evidently pertaining to specific events, often depicted with violence and passion.

Chapter 6.6. Andy Warhol.

310 In doing so the film remains faithful to its autobiographical source material (Wojnarowicz, 1992). Wojnarowicz deliberately declines to name himself in this collection of essays and sketches. His preference, particularly in the first two chapters, is to place an emphasis on his body parts in a catalogue of anatomical references, so placing his sexuality above the traditional introductory information of birthplace, date of birth or childhood memories (Waggoner, 2000: 174-175).

While the gay content of such paintings may therefore have been ignored, the filmic representations of their painter's lives have certainly not followed suit, accounting for some of the censorship battles mentioned above. Once such scenes or their painter's lifestyle are transposed to the large cinema screen shared by an audience, there is a different type of reaction to safely viewing a small, stationary image mounted on a wall or hearing the latest gossip about a personality. The gay world becomes real and can be naked, sweaty and bitchy. Butt (2005: 108) analyses art world gossip in New York to show how Warhol's 'swishiness' was unacceptable even to other successful contemporary gay artists such as Jasper Johns, who thought by such cavorting he brought disrepute to the artistic world and the status of gay artists within it in particular.³¹¹ Rather than change his persona, Warhol worked on overcoming this image by promoting himself as a modern Oscar Wilde, what Butt (2005: 13) describes as "the now familiar asexual postmodern dandy." Warhol is recognised by the public first and foremost as a style icon, and queer only as a secondary condition. There is the deliberate adoption of a "cold distant detached personality" where "Warhol deliberately creates himself as freakish, queer other" (Butt, 2005: 117-118), by the use of silver blond wigs, worn uncombed and slightly askew, mumbling and monosyllabic, so often incoherent, and exaggeration of his 'swish' features, particularly his walk and limp wrist. The three films featuring him follow this mould, showing him at periods by which he was already firmly established on the New York social as well as artistic scene, and where his artistic output had moved away from painting towards film.

As already mentioned, the three films about Warhol provide three snapshots of the artist at different artistic stages of his life. While he is not the principal subject of any of these films, his screen time is sufficient to display his character in depth and commensurate with the pivotal nature of his relationship with the principal figure. The

311 The homophobic abuse Warhol was subjected to outside the art world is very effectively conveyed by the calculated brutal verbal attack on him mounted by the father of his 'superstar' Edie Sedgwick in *Factory Girl*. Edie proudly takes him to meet her parents for the first time at a top New York restaurant. In this very public arena her father says very loudly, "Who is this guy who has my little girl turned around? He must be some kind of man. Then I talk to you for two minutes, and I have to smile because I don't have a thing to worry about, do I? You're a full-blown queer."

arch-media manipulator can be seen transforming himself.³¹² Seeing three different actors in the role emphasises this chameleon like ability in the original artist. All three actors reproduce the distinctive voice and walk, but otherwise indicate how his representation was always changing. Guy Pearce in *Factory Girl* is appropriately the most outgoing and confident as he becomes a media star alongside his 'superstar' Edie Sedgwick. Jared Harris in *I Shot Andy Warhol* is the most reticent and uninvolved, who pays heavily for being relatively nice to Valerie Solanus. With *Basquiat*, Warhol finds renewed inspiration through the young painter, returning to painting from filmmaking and perhaps also falling in love with the man. Alongside this rejuvenation comes a change in physical appearance, as Bockris (1998: 461) describes, "from Brooks Brothers shirts and ties to black leather jackets, sunglasses and black jeans", making him look younger and thinner, which ideally suits the physique of David Bowie playing him.³¹³

The casting of Bowie in itself brings another element of queerness to the film. His iconic status within pop music culture was partly built upon the ambiguity of his sexual image, both on stage in the flamboyant androgynous alter ego Ziggy Stardust, and also offstage with his open declaration of bisexuality within his heavily publicised private life. As Warhol's personal appearance changes, so too do the surroundings in which his performance is set. The 60s world of *Factory Girl* is a distinctly queer one. No one viewing the film can miss the transvestite, transgender and sado-masochism invoked at the Factory in its party days. The effeminate side of Warhol is projected in the juxtaposition of two sets of cross-cutting between Edie and Andy. Firstly, when they are both getting ready to go out on the town, with Edie choosing her make-up juxtaposed with Andy choosing his wig, both in front of their mirrors. Secondly, with each sitting naked in a bubble bath in their respective homes, talking on the 'phone, Andy is doubly feminised by his wearing of a very unglamorous plastic hair protector. By the time Valerie Solanus

312 This was by no means deliberate, just happy circumstance. The producers of *I Shot Andy Warhol* recognised that they had been caught out over the making of *Basquiat* at roughly the same time. *Basquiat*, with its much higher profile cast and the backing of Miramax as distributor, completely overshadowed the Valerie Solanus vehicle (Vachon, 1998: 279).

313 The black leather jacket Bowie wears in the film belonged to Warhol. Bowie was in addition given access to handle many of Warhol's personal belongings held by the Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh. Bowie was most affected by handling the small handbag Warhol took with him into hospital, containing a number of personal mementoes (Spitz, 2010: 364).

shoots him in an upstairs room at the Factory, the Factory glitz has been left behind and in *I Shot Andy Warhol* the incident shows how far the former Bohemian catalysts of the Factory have metamorphosed into sober suited business administrators, working at their office desks. Andy himself is also dressed very soberly even if not in a suit. It is left to one of Warhol's transvestite superstars, Candy Darling, played by Stephen Dorff, to provide a clear link between the lesbian world of Valerie and the queer world that still remained on the fringes of Warhol's factory. In *Basquiat*, while Basquiat and Warhol do collaborate in artistic works, their interaction is largely confined to the bare painting studio, which reflects the way Warhol in real life excluded Basquiat from the Factory building for several years, to distance himself from the drug-related party years and sustain a new, more sober image with his return to painting from movie-making (Bockris, 1998: 460).

Chapter 6.7. Conclusion.

A quotation from Hockney exposes the major contradiction within the queer artist biopic, which has shown more interest in exploring the private sex life of the artist than in the creation of his artistic output. However, it also shows that even Hockney had some sympathy with the filmmakers' view, considering that the director, Jack Hazan,

"In the end...he emphasised things – emphasising the gayness was a bit much. Sex doesn't dominate my life at all, really. I think painting does. It's just a small part. I suppose it's just the publicity – people are interested in it because of that really – to see the homosexuality which I thought as just an accepted part of people's lives" (Hockney, 1975: 9).

Monk (2000: 156-157) certainly sees a wider acceptance of sexual identities within British films of the 90s, at least in those confined to the art-house circuit. Indeed, she considers it apparent to the extent that "male gayness had gained mainstream acceptance as a lifestyle (or cluster of lifestyles)". By the time *Little Ashes* is released in 2008, even though the revelation of a homosexual relationship between the leading historical characters is the *raison d'être* for the production, this aspect attracted little comment among reviewers. Interest was centred on the appearance of Robert Pattinson playing Dalí, and released immediately after his first huge success in part one of the *Twilight* Trilogy,

Twilight (Catherine Hardwicke, 2008) concerning teenage vampires. John Maybury in *Love is the Devil* used Bacon as his mouthpiece to express the importance of a queer lifestyle to his work, when he said,

“When I went into the house of pleasure I didn’t stay in the room where they celebrate acceptable modes of loving in the bourgeois style. I went into the rooms which are kept secret. And I learned and lay on their beds...I went into the rooms which are kept secret, which they consider shameful even to name. But there is no such shame for me. Because then what sort of poet and what sort of artist would I be?” (Maybury, 1998: 14-15).

A more cynical view is expressed by Alexander Walker (1997: 53) after many years as a film critic, noting:

“Tragic obsessions like Bacon’s, which may have been the wellspring of his art, are the principal reasons why commercial cinema is hooked on art. The reputation of the artist is the licence for movie-makers to deal with sexual perversions and violence that would be harder to present in the lives of folk who are not so venerated for their talents or their market value”.

This means, as Dixon (1998: 33) comments, “For filmmakers the struggle in the studio remains typically psycho-sexual rather than technical”. Although film is in this sense ultimately dependent on financial success and biography is moulded to this purpose, it is to be hoped that the increasingly casual and explicit depiction of the queer lifestyle of several artists also reflects more open attitudes to sexuality within society generally.

What has been found in this chapter is a very complex set of inter-relationships around gender and sexuality. What are often taken as cut and dried characteristics within the biopic as a whole prove more elusive within the sub-genre of the artist biopic, and open up discussion adding to the continuing interest in and variety of output. The contradictory interpretations even within a single work add humanity to the characters, helping to avoid one-dimensional portraits. The areas of discussion lie at the very heart of the debate over the authenticity of the biopic, discussed in the Introduction, in the tendency to foreground emotive issues over the presentation of a purely factual account of the life of the artist.

Chapter 7. Gallery artists as directors of artist biopics

Many of the key players in the production of artist biopics, for example, Charles Laughton with Rembrandt, Kirk Douglas and Van Gogh, Charlton Heston and Michelangelo, and Ed Harris and Pollock, have undertaken intensive research into their subjects. In many cases this initial interest arises from these actors and directors being an amateur artist themselves. French (2004) features twenty-three directors in his *Art by Film Directors*, of which all but two had received artistic training.³¹⁴ Many others directors and actors have been held in high enough regard as an artist to be able to profit from their hobby and sell their paintings. For example, among Hollywood stars this has been the case for Kim Novack, Jeff Bridges, Charles Bronson, Pierce Brosnan, Richard Chamberlain, Tony Curtis and Sylvester Stallone (Walker, 2003: 43). Within this category, in connection with artist biopics, we can include the actor Anthony Quinn (Gauguin in *Lust for Life*) and directors John Huston (*Moulin Rouge*) and Maurice Pialat (*Van Gogh*).

What is to be undertaken in this chapter is an analysis of a small group of artist biopics where the director has been much more than the kind of successful amateur artist mentioned above, in that they have received a full artistic training and achieved professional success firstly as a gallery artist and only subsequently turned to filmmaking. This criterion applies to Peter Greenaway (*Nightwatching, Goltzius and the Pelican Company*), Derek Jarman (*Caravaggio*), Lech Majewski (*The Mill and the Cross*), Charles Matton (*Rembrandt*), John Maybury (*Love is the Devil*), Julian Schnabel (*Basquiat*), and Joyce Wieland (*The Far Shore*). These films will be discussed with the intention of noting whether the professional artist as director brings a unique vision and understanding to the artist biopic. In particular, do they provide a depth of understanding and insight into the creative process lacking in the standard biopic? In this connection two features will take precedence for discussion: firstly, the use of new technology in both displaying the artist's work and entering into his world (Greenaway, Maybury, Majewski); secondly, the

314 Admittedly, several of these were included for work not regularly accepted as worthy of artistic status, such as Hitchcock for his storyboarding. On the other hand it is a very selective listing and omits not only a relatively unknown director such as Zoltán Huszárík (*Csontváry*, 1980) who made several paintings and other pieces of art, but also many famous names where their work was not readily available for reproduction in the book, such as Vincent Gallo, Orson Welles, Jean-Luc Godard and Kathryn Bigelow.

promotion by the director of a political and/or nationalistic cause (Jarman, Wieland). These productions can then be compared to the more traditional approach to the biopic adopted by Matton and Schnabel. In all cases, is there a synergy between the recreation of the artist as subject and his times and the artistic work created by the director around the time of filming?

In Chapter 2 the work of several directors was mentioned within the history of artist biopics where the boundaries of technology have been tested to achieve the cinematographic effects insisted on by the auteur in charge. For example, in Huston's *Moulin Rouge* the use of a more subtle use of Technicolor film stock is essential; while in Watkin's *Edvard Munch* there is experimentation in the layering of the soundtrack. Here, I will argue that the artist biopics produced by gallery artists John Maybury and Lech Majewski have each taken the use of cutting edge technology to a higher level, exploiting the rapid development of new techniques to the full and providing a more complete form of immersible experience for the viewer. On the other hand, while Peter Greenaway has devoted much time to proselytising on the need to find a different language for cinema, based on a visual rather than an oral tradition, this has still to find its maturity in his narrative film as against his gallery and documentary film work. It is suggested that the way forward for these gallery artist auteur directors points to a possible return to the limited distribution of the art gallery and avant-garde film circuits of the past in the development of a revived museum/gallery/special one-off showings circuits, as their films' limited box-office appeal does not attract the art-house distribution systems.

Chapter 7.1. John Maybury.

John Maybury was trained at St. Albans College of Art & Design, [North East London Polytechnic](#) and [Saint Martins College of Art](#). He emerged as the highest profile artist (as opposed to musician) member of the 'New Romantic' group and first made his reputation with his joint ICA Exhibiton with Cerith Wyn Evans entitled *A Certain Sensibility* in 1981. He worked with Derek Jarman as designer, set designer and editor for three of his feature films and ended up directing the last 30 minutes of *The Last of England*. While picking up useful experience in this way he also used Jarman's method of earning an

income, by directing pop music video promo tapes.³¹⁵ His artistic output was in experimental video production, where he won acclaim for several features blending pop music with creative imagery, particularly of a confrontational manner, pushing the boundaries of what sexual material, usually of a gay nature, could be shown. He invented many of his state-of-the-art editing techniques as the work was shot. By the early 1980s he was the leading light of the British underground film movement. However, when it came to making *Love is the Devil*, his biopic about Frances Bacon, he did not draw directly on the style of his artistic work but choose a less aggressive and more straightforward technique more suitable for the art house as against the avant-garde circuit, maintaining the narrative momentum of a biopic, though he was to retain a fairly loose narrative structure.³¹⁶ He cast actors who not only gave intense performances but who also, with a little make-up, strongly resembled the characters they were portraying. However, he was denied the right by the Bacon Estate to reproduce any of Bacon's works or direct reported speech. He had to find a way round this that would still enable his film to convey an essence of the real Bacon. His answer to the question of dialogue has already been examined (see Chapter 4: 2). Here, some greater detail is given to show his innovative use of the technology available to him at the time.

Maybury achieved a distinctive *mise-en-scène* by the use of four elements: coating camera lenses from the 1950s and 1960s; limited lighting of the studio interior sets by electric bulbs as suggested in Bacon's paintings; breaking the space of the frame into the triptych composition favoured in the paintings; and a use of up-to-date CGI, on which he was an expert from his video productions (Willis, 1998: 50-53). The lenses conjured up the garish milieu haunted by Bacon by the use of distortion, so people appeared 'ugly' and everywhere was viewed as if through an alcoholic haze. Maybury was able to afford some CGI on his limited budget because of his working relationship with CGI studios over

315 He was very successful in this field, for example, winning several awards for Sinéad O'Connor's "Nothing Compares 2 U" (1990) which was voted Number 35 in the top pop videos of all time in an MVP survey carried out by Channel 4 in 2005. <http://www.itnsource.com/en/shotlist/ITVProg/2005/02/06/Y09420007/?is=100%Greatest> Accessed 23/05/2014.

316 Although the film's credits suggest it was based on *The Gilded Gutter Life of Francis Bacon* by Daniel Farson, the rights to it were in fact bought more specifically to provide a legal loophole against and limit interference in production by the Bacon Estate (Kalin, 1998: 61).

his video art (Smith, 2000: 147). Only four CGI sequences ended up in the finished film, the most effective probably being the shot when Bacon and his lover and muse George Dyer walk by a shop window at night. On peering into the window, Dyer sees a raw and bleeding man crouched on a cabinet. The man's image was built by computer.

Felleman (2012:228) rightly points out that Maybury's experimentation always stays true to the spirit of Bacon's work. Maybury only used the limited colour palette of Bacon's paintings in his *mise-en-scène* and took the abject mood and implied violence of the paintings as an inspiration and succeeded in finding "cinematic equivalents for painterly attitudes."³¹⁷ Maybury was very aware that:

In making a film about such an artist, your first responsibility is to make a really visual film. To me, the failure of a lot of films that are made about visual artists is that they tend to concentrate on the extravagances and excesses of the characters, often at the expense of the images depicting their work...The paintings are almost telling you what to do. They present this very claustrophobic, modernish environment – quite clean and quite cold in a sense, but there's also this frenzy and energy within the figures (quoted in Willis, 1998: 48).

Chapter 7.2. Lech Majewski.

In *The Mill and the Cross*, Lech Majewski attempts to both explain and bring to life Peter Bruegel's *The Way to Calvary* (1564). It is the culmination of his work both within and outside of the film industry as the two elements merge together. His formal art training took place in Warsaw at the Academy of Fine Arts in the 1970s, then on to the National Film School in Łódź, where he was taught by Wojciech Has. He left Poland in the early 1980s to avoid the imposition of martial law, having made two feature films, *Zwiastowanie* (An Annunciation, 1978) and *Rycerz* (The Knight, 1980). He went first to England and then on to the United States, and he now holds joint US/Polish citizenship. Several of his films have been based around paintings and painters.³¹⁸ He said, "I'm a

317 The blur, smear, flicker and fluidity of Bacon's work is carefully reproduced via filming through old panes of glass, old lenses, a boroscope and even with tracing paper and coloured gels. A hand-made shutter, adapted from a domestic hand drill, which ran asynchronously, often replaced the motion picture camera shutter (Felleman, 2012: 227). When it was revved at different speeds it caused the image to flutter, which when moved away from the camera caused the image to jump out at the viewer because it created a flash-frame (Willis, 1998: 50)

318 The most obvious example being *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (2004) where the leading female character is obsessed with Hieronymus Bosch's masterpiece. Majewski co-wrote and produced *Basquiat*

painter so the history of art is one of my favourite subjects. I read a lot of books about it. Also, I am a great lover of old masters, particularly the proto-Renaissance and the Renaissance" (quoted in Guillen, 2011: 6).³¹⁹ Such remarks, we shall see, could equally have been made by Peter Greenaway. Majewski was inspired by Michael Francis Gibson's (2000) book on Bruegel's painting (Guillen, 2011: 2). He sought a means of explaining the setting and symbolism of the painting presented so vividly in the book without resorting to a flat art historical lecture. He said "I want the viewer to live within the painting" (Majewski, 2010: 3). He explained that "I had a vision. I wanted to enter Bruegel's world" (quoted in Thomson, 2011: 17). He was able to achieve his vision owing to the declining costs of CGI work (Barnes, 2010: 33), taking some three years from conception to finished film (Majewski, 2010:2). A crude version of the concept has already been mentioned in connection with Kurosawa's *Crows* (See Chapter 3.3), where the CGI available at the time only allowed a limited application of what Kurosawa would have liked to do. This was a light-hearted amusing vignette in paying homage to the great master Van Gogh, without the high cultural intentions surrounding Majewski's film. Here a member of the public enters one of Van Gogh's canvases and spends some five minutes searching for him in the countryside. For Majewski, the artist himself is a pivot of the film and there is an hour and a half to discover the hidden meaning of a single one of Bruegel's paintings.

To bring Bruegel's painting to life Majewski developed four techniques. He shot his live actors in front of a blue screen so they could later be integrated with various backdrops. He also shot actors against real locations in Poland, the Czech Republic and Austria, choosing landscapes resembling those found in Bruegel's paintings. He also filmed cloud effects in New Zealand as these most nearly resembled those in this particular painting. Finally, Majewski and his assistants painted a huge 2D backdrop on canvas. All these elements have then to be integrated, with, for example, an actor who had been shot in front of a blue screen being added to several layers of painted backcloth, location footage and digital skies (Majewski, 2010: 3). In this way the film was

and was at first going to direct it, but he deferred to Julian Schnabel because of Schnabel's direct knowledge of the subject.

319 Majewski has been responsible for both the conception and graphic design in several treatises on the history of art, see, for example, Folga-Januszewska (2000), or, Orlińska-Mianowska, (2003).

itself a painterly task. The layering also produces a crystal clear image, achieving a three dimensional experience without the use of special 3D cameras or viewing glasses and without the frequent dark images which are a standard feature of parts of films projected via 3D systems on large cinema screens.³²⁰

At first Majewski wanted his camera to enter Bruegel's painting and simply wander among the five hundred figures included in it, so displaying the living actors as a continuous *tableau vivant* (Guillen, 2011: 10).³²¹ He soon realised that this approach was not varied enough for a feature film length and nor did it impart the vital information he wanted the audience to receive to be able to understand and fully appreciate the painting. He uses this still tableau method for the first five minutes or so giving the audience a chance to see the scale of the picture and the beauty of it, and to adjust to the novelty of the images. From the start Bruegel and his patron Nicolaes Jonghelinck enter to provide exposition. They, and later the Virgin Mary, directly address the camera, so the viewer is aware of the artificiality of the situation even though immersed in it visually. In effect Bruegel becomes a ringmaster, determining how much of his technique of composition will be shown, how much symbolism explained, and pointing to particular groupings within the picture to illustrate his ideas and artistic choices.³²² During Bruegel's monologues for the audience it is rather like having a chat with the famous painter over a glass of wine, very intimate. This is emphasised as Bruegel is played by sixty-seven year old Rutger Hauer as a very imposing but approachable figure, whereas Bruegel was actually only thirty-nine when he painted *The Way to Calvary*. However, there is nothing cozy about many of the events depicted in the painting. It was a very violent age and the atrocities carried out by the occupying Spanish soldiers are shown in their full horror, with men crucified and women buried alive. This sets up one of the many contrasts within the

320 Graham Leggatt, when writing the program note for the film's showing at the 54th San Francisco International Film Festival, described *The Mill and the Cross* as "A miracle of technology in the service of the artistic imagination" (quoted in Guillen, 2011: 2).

321 This feature was not entirely new to Majewski who had used a variant of it in his *Angelus* (2000). Each indoor room and the stories that unfold within a commune are like vignettes. They look like individual oil paintings. The experience of viewing the film is like walking through a gallery. You stop in front of each picture and the images start moving, the story takes off. Use of directional lighting adds to the oil-painting effect, similar to directional light from candle sources in old paintings.

322 The historical background is left to Jonghelinck, who at this point talks to Bruegel but later also explains current political events in Flanders to his wife.

film. The audience is shown the existence of beauty immediately adjacent to horror, a contrast heightened by the symbolic blood red cloaks of the Spanish cavalry. The red is artificially enhanced to be more visceral.

Majewski wants his audience to experience the daily life of sixteenth-century Flanders, so they can understand what drove Bruegel to depict the Crucifixion in what were to him contemporary terms. Where Pialet in *Van Gogh* thought it sufficient to detail the ordinary everyday events in the daily life of his painter in order to understand the paintings, Majewski provides much more of an explanatory framework for the viewer. To make the painting more accessible, about a dozen of its characters are followed in their daily lives on a single day. Bruegel's own family is included in the daily life of the village, as the film begins with the inhabitants arising from slumber. The film keeps coming back to the chosen representative characters, providing repetitive motifs, and anchoring the episodes explored in more detail within overall secular rituals. Guillen (2011: 3) plausibly interprets this use of motifs and repetition as imitating the way a viewer's attention circulates when looking at a dense canvas.³²³ The banal activities of everyday life and events of great religious significance carry on alongside one another. In Bruegel's face-to-camera expositions, great attention is paid to explaining the religious symbols so unfamiliar to modern audiences but which meant so much in the daily life of the times and whose meaning would have been taken for granted at the time of the painting. Majewski concentrates on the subversive aspects of the painting via the very slow build-up of the limited narrative. An everyday bawdiness takes place adjacent to the Crucifixion. The miller is given the high perch at the top of his impossibly high and impossibly structured mountain which would normally be reserved for God in the religious paintings of the time (Guillen, 2011: 3).

Another facet that greatly affects the mood of the piece is its soundtrack. Here we find Majewski as the polymath, not only directing and providing the screenplay, but also

323 A round loaf of bread is worshipped as the staff of life: a plump ungainly woman on her way to market keeps rebuffing the advances of a drunken fellow traveller; the children of the village keep running through the streets and houses in noisy play, unaware of the significant events taking place around them.

composing the music.³²⁴ He provides a recurring simple tune played on a flute by an itinerant musician cum fool who turns up at several crucial moments, providing the light relief after the dramatic highpoints. Sound is used to impose scale and foster the feeling of anxiety. The miller's footsteps echo menacingly around the interior of his mill as if in a cathedral. His assistant's mounting of the interior wooden staircase becomes a *tour de force*, slow and painfully loud as his feet beat out a solemn rhythm. Similarly, the approach of the Spanish cavalry is always preceded by loud echoing hoof-beats even before they enter the screen frame. There are also lots of opportunities for exploiting knocking and banging, as in the assembling or dismantling of the cross and other criminal crucifixion devices and in these too the sound is greatly magnified adding to the atmosphere of gloom, fear and destruction.

Overall *The Mill and the Cross* does not fit into a standard art-house niche, being neither a costume drama nor an abstract object d'art. It does, however, stand as a link between visual art and film. In his work, Majewski was already withdrawing from dialogue and giving precedent to both music and landscapes. He envisaged the film as 'an event'.³²⁵ *The Mill and the Cross* was devised initially as a commissioned work for showing in five museums, the MOMA, the Louvre, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, the Prado in Madrid and the Kusthistorisches Museum in Vienna (Guillen, 2011: 10). Majewski was completely surprised that after several festival showings it was eventually sold to fifty countries for theatrical exhibition. At the same time he again created a series of related videoart pieces under the title *Bruegel Suite* which during 2011 were installed at the Louvre (February), the 54th Venice Biennale (June) and the National Museum, Kraków (Majewski, 2011: 1).

The coda to the film can be interpreted as an acknowledgement of this new situation. *The Way to Calvary* is shown hanging in its gallery position at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. The shot begins with the painting taking up the full

324 Majewski is also a novelist, poet, essayist, composer and director of opera and playwright and theatre director. A full list of his accomplishments can be found in Majewski (2010: 8-10).

325 It would continue the successful formula shown in his *Glass Lips* (2007), where thirty-three video/art/photographic pieces, called *Blood of a Poet*, were originally shown over several rooms of a gallery and the material was subsequently re-edited to form a feature film (Verrone, 2011: 188-192).

frame, centered on the Virgin Mary , and it appears huge, with its five hundred figures easily accommodated on the cinema screen and its blown-up size making it easier to discern the now familiar themes and messages which have been explained during the film. Then the camera begins a pull-back lasting two minutes, which immediately exposes that the real painting is actually very small and vulnerable as it sits alongside one other Bruegel, *The Tower of Babel* (1563), in a large exhibition room. The audience has been privileged to have been shown its detail under great magnification, as this is lost almost immediately the camera is a few inches away from the painting. It is implied that to simply see a painting momentarily on the wall of a gallery is completely insufficient to fully appreciate its skill, beauty and message. The modern immersive techniques of Majewski's film have actually provided a more satisfactory viewing experience. As the camera moves back so the sound of dance music originating from within the picture frame gradually fades away to a silence. As more and more paintings are exposed in the gallery, the pivotal place of Bruegel's work within its European heritage is confirmed. The camera slides sideways to include the huge imposing door to the gallery on the right of the painting. As the camera continues to move back so the immensity of the gallery corridors and rooms leading off are shown. For the viewer it has been humbling to have access to a detailed introduction to both the painting and the painter.

Chapter 7.3. Peter Greenaway.

The recent films of Peter Greenaway also show this tendency to move towards a stronger interrelationship between film and art work, between cinema performance and gallery/museum exhibition. Even in the mid-1990s he was saying when interviewed, "The whole question for me is to get away from the set cinema situation where the people sit in the dark, look in one direction, see an illusionistic object on a flat screen – not to mention all the related problems of distribution and organisation" (Danek, 1994: 167-168). His investment of time in extra cinema activities is his way of hoping to reinvent the cinema, by bringing other artistic forms into it (Greenaway, 2005: 1). Despite the number of films he has made and their relative box-office and critical success, he has always, like Majewski, considered himself an artist first and foremost and a filmmaker at second

best.³²⁶ He has also in recent years continually championed the theme that cinema is dead and requires a new language to invigorate it again. He has also maintained an interesting tension within all his types of artistic output between referring back through two thousand years of the history of painting for inspiration while at the same time promoting the use of the very latest technologies to achieve new viewpoints that had not been possible to explore before. Within this mix of sometimes conflicting pathways, with the making of *Nightwatching* (2007) he has publicly accepted the artist bio-pic as a valid film genre in its own right (Greenaway, 2007: 6) and one to which he plans to contribute regularly owing to his immersion in art history.³²⁷ The film will here be considered particularly in relation to whether in this case Greenaway's proposals to revive cinema do or do not result in a new interpretation of the artist bio-pic

Greenaway (n.d.: 5) suggests that at just over one hundred years old, the cinema is effectively dead and requires a new language to revive it: "I do indeed think that cinema is mortal. There is a lot of evidence already that it is dying on its feet." He argues that it has become too reliant on a strong narrative content which in turn leads to a strong emotional rather than intellectual reaction by an audience.³²⁸ The power of the image is dissipated as viewers look but do not really see, that is, analyse, what is on screen.³²⁹ He was heavily influenced by Formalist theories and Brecht's theories on alienation while at Walthamstow Art School in his teens, then he had fifteen years practical experience making shorts for the Central Office of Information (Greenaway,

326 Indeed, Greenaway, like Majewski, can also be seen as a modern polymath, having successful concurrent careers as writer, opera librettist, theatre director, and art curator in addition to his most well known roles as painter and visual artist. He said in November 2012, "I don't want to be a filmmaker. I think painting is far more exciting and profound", claiming that, like his latest biographical subject Goltzius, he would like to make enough money so he can retire to painting completely (Brooks, 2012: 1). He said in 1991 that "I started my career as a painter and painting is still, for me, the supreme visual means of communication...Painting stimulates me more than any other cultural activity" (cited in Pascoe, 1997: 22).

327 A second Dutch artist biopic, on the life of erotic watercolourist Hendrik Goltzius (1580-1630) titled *Goltzius and the Pelican Company*, has just appeared at some European film festivals. Its sexual frankness and violence as well as experimental style appears to be putting off theatrical distributors. Greenaway also remains interested in the cinema, with *Eisenstein in Guanajuato* going into pre-production in 2011. (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1702429> Accessed 28/07/2011) and he was actively searching to cast a Russian actor to play Eisenstein when showing *Goltzius* at the Moscow Film Festival (Gordon, 2012: 1).

328 In this connection he believes: "If you want to tell stories, be a writer, not a filmmaker" and because of this failure, "I don't think we've seen any cinema yet. I think we've seen 100 years of illustrated text."

329 Greenaway has said, "Just because you've got eyes doesn't mean you can see" (Greenaway, 2010: 3).

2005: 1 and Hacker, 1991: 189). Greenaway sees the need to re-establish the image as dominant and to banish emotional response via a highlighting of the artificiality of the filming process, so that a viewer is definitely aware of watching a film and not a slice of real life.³³⁰ He has experimented with placing less emphasis on narrative and using games, catalogues, numbers and colours as the base for his films. "We cannot have narrative without sequence, but can we have sequence without narrative?" (Greenaway, 2010: 3).³³¹ A subsequent artificiality and distancing of his characters has led to him often being criticised for making very cold, intellectual films of appeal to only a section of the art house market.³³² He has a high regard for his audiences as well as expecting them to make an effort to appreciate his intentions.³³³ He said (2010: 2), "I think that films or indeed any art work should be made in a way that they are infinitely viewable; so that you could go back to it time and time again, not necessarily immediately but over a space of time, and see new things in it, or new ways of looking at it".

Does Greenaway's bio-pic of a painter, whom he reveres, actually exhibit any technique and style that might be said to contribute to what Greenaway would consider a revived cinema? Certainly, *Nightwatching* is presented in a very formal style, largely shot in a studio as if on a theatrical set, with asides directly addressing the audience, and constantly deliberately making the audience aware of all its artifice in a Brechtian manner. For example, much is made of the flexibility of the set of Rembrandt's studio. While the presence of a huge bed within the space is historically accurate, as living accommodation was limited and had to be flexible, Greenaway features it as an alienating

330 Much of the early influences on him have been retained in his approach to filming. He said to Gavin Smith in 1990, "My cinema is deliberately artificial, and it's always self-reflexive. Every time you watch a Greenaway movie, you know you are definitely and absolutely *only watching a movie*" (cited in Gras, 2000a: x. Italics in the original).

331 Greenaway says "I have no belief in the magic of numbers, nor do I hold any mystical or mythical belief associated with them...The knowledge that the arithmetical system has a complete logic that everybody understands, which most systems of ordering do not, is comforting... But my main reason is to use numerical codes, equations and countings as an alternative to narrative dominance. I make catalogue movies. I am very dubious about the use of narrative in cinema, but if you don't have narrative, if you throw away that prop, you still have to organise the material in a comprehensible way" (Quoted in Woods (1998: 135)).

332 For example, see Van Wert (1990/1991: 42-50), Hacker (1991: 195), and Lawrence (1997: 4).

333 Greenaway (2010: 2) said "I want to regard my public as infinitely intelligent, as understanding notions of the suspension of disbelief and as realising all the time that this is not a slice of life, this is openly a film."

device. It is very large and mounted on rollers, so it can be pulled and pushed in-and-out of the frame: one minute appearing like a monstrous armed vehicle, while at the next, within its curtains, being a haven of peace and quiet.³³⁴ Greenaway also makes frequent use of another Brechtian device with the characters addressing the audience by speaking direct to the camera. This works well when Rembrandt and Saskia remember the way they met and managed their early married life, as an easy intimacy of equal partners is firmly established, that will later make the loss of Saskia even more poignant. The detail of everyday life in the seventeenth century obviously fascinates Greenaway, such as the laundresses drying sheets in the background of the Militia's training ground. Such outdoor activity contrasts with the abstraction of the interior sets, especially the artificiality and fake perspective of the roof terrace on Rembrandt's house. Here the most moving and horrific monologues on child abuse are delivered in a monotonous matter-of-fact style. The horror is to some extent contained by this artifice, as Greenaway deliberately intends.³³⁵

However, despite Greenaway's protestations that cinema must find a new language based on the visual, his film is very wordy and merely continues the pre-occupations of his earlier work, foregrounding the body, colour and violence. Greenaway is above all a pragmatist. Looking back over his career he recognises that he has attempted to maintain "the right balance between risk and reassurance". The cinema is his living and he "didn't want to commit creative suicide" by being too avant-garde and completely alienating his audience (quoted in Brooks, 2012: 2). As he says, "There's no use making a painting or a film if nobody will see it" (quoted in Lyman, 2012: 1). To air his pre-occupations, Greenaway concentrates on the production history of Rembrandt's *The Nightwatch* weaving his own eccentric meanings into the symbols placed in the painting. The development of his plot as a murder mystery, perhaps a sop to the film being sold as an

334 It comes to symbolise the stages of family life: birth (Saskia bears Titus), the prime of life (Rembrandt romps with all three of his lovers in its playpen), and the scene of death (both literally with the passing of Saskia, and symbolically, with the blinding of Rembrandt by the crowds in his nightmares).

335 Greenaway (2010: 1) said "I always think that if you deal with extremely emotional, even melodramatic, subject matter, as I constantly do, the best way to handle those situations is at sufficient remove. It's like a doctor and a nurse and a casualty situation. You can't help the patient and you can't help yourself by emoting. And I don't think cinema is intended for therapy, so I also object to that huge, massive manipulation which is perpetrated on the public."

entertainment, leads to a conflict of intentions. While the murder clues are yet another reminder of his love of games, in establishing the intricacies of Rembrandt's famous painting within the format of a police investigation the film is placed on a very strong narrative base rather than an image-base. While Greenaway breaks the plot up into disjointed episodes where the timescale moves forwards and backwards, the time-shifts are not obvious on screen, only via a reading of the script. None of the players visibly ages or gets younger, nor are any captions provided to establish the date of the action. The film also only makes sense against a detailed background of Dutch history, especially in the inter-relationship between the role of the upper hierarchy of the Amsterdam Militia with the foreign relations of the Low Countries with England and France. Greenaway has virtually to keep the film idling to provide long expositions on the significance of European events, unfamiliar to most of the audiences outside of Holland, in order to explain why Captain Piers Hasselburgh had to die.

Greenaway considers himself firstly as an artist and only secondly as a filmmaker. He is proud of his knowledge of art history and draws on it continually to make connections between his work and the place of art in society. He has used his detailed knowledge of individual painters as a source for an appropriate pictorial influence in each of his feature films.³³⁶ This technique is continued, and can clearly be seen in the attributions to design suggestions, in the screenplay of *Nightwatching*. Within the first scene alone, there are direct visual references not only to Rembrandt's own *Blinding of Samson*, but also Rubens' *Fall of Angels* and Caravaggio's *Conversion of Saint Paul*, and can also be seen in the allusions to Caravaggio's use of chiaroscuro, the sunlight in a de Witte interior and square and rectangular floor patterns inspired by Mondrian (Greenaway, 2006:5-9). This ties in with Greenaway's statement in an interview with Paul Wells in 1996 that "constantly for me, the whole 2000 years of European painting is a vast encyclopaedia for

336 Greenaway's own paintings and collages feature throughout *A Walk Through H*; Georges de la Tour and Januarius Zick in *The Draughtsman's Contract*; Vermeer for *A Zed and Two Noughts*; Bronzino and Pierra della Francesca over *The Belly of an Architect*; the Pre-Raphaelites for *Drowning by Numbers*; Franz Hals and the school of Dutch still-life in *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Love*; Titian, Giogione, Boticelli and Bellini in *Prospero's Books*; da Crevalcore, Desiderio, and Bellini are used in *The Baby of Macon*; Utamaro and Hokusai for *The Pillow Book* (Pascoe, 1997: 22).

dipping in, for making comparisons, for seeing what other people have done under the same circumstances" (cited in Pascoe, 1997: 23).

Greenaway has always recognised the immense attraction that the art of the Dutch golden age period has for him. He said:

"I think the most successful of all painting has been that of the Dutch golden age – I refer to it in much of my work – because it was done when each individual painter was most understood. It's very bourgeois, not the privilege of the church or state. It was the time when art became most democratic and so most understood by the most people on both its literal and allegorical levels" (quoted in Pally, 1991: 108).

Greenaway uses his detailed knowledge of art history to construct an idiosyncratic interpretation of *The Nightwatch*, almost as an obsession. He makes the subject of his investigation quite clear in the Preface to his screenplay (2006: 3).³³⁷ He concludes that "The painting is a demonstration of murder with the murderers all picked out in detail."³³⁸ The film is just one element within the investigation, being backed up with a book (Greenaway, 2007) and a second, documentary, film, *Rembrandt's J'Accuse* (2008). While *Nightwatching* can be viewed as a stand-alone, and will be so by most of its audience, it carries greater resonance when viewed as part of Greenaway's total work on *The Nightwatch* in both film and text, as the murder mystery strand is then given prominence over the personal life of the painter. The documentary is a tour-de-force by Greenaway, providing a relentless ninety-minute lecture, with his talking image nearly continuously on screen via a small framed insert, so the narrator cannot be forgotten.³³⁹ Unfortunately, as Dargis (2009: 1) has pointed out, his analysis of every inch of the painting's surface, dividing the picture into intersecting and overlapping squares, tends to make the screen resemble a set of drab software windows on a computer monitor, rather than a carefully

337 "There is an academic tradition in the investigation of great paintings for meanings that are supposedly concealed...We intend to make a film about Rembrandt's forensic enquiry in paint, his Crime Scene Investigation in the Breestraat, and we intend to call our case-history *Nightwatching*."

338 Greenaway (2006: 3) rather gleefully suggests that his unusual lines of enquiry may mean "The over wise academics are going to have apoplexy with the argument of this film that makes Rembrandt a Sherlock Holmes".

339 Greenaway builds his case for a murder indictment being represented within *The Nightwatch* on some thirty pieces of evidence, each of which is meticulously followed up.

thought out filmic way to display his evidence. In this case Greenaway has singularly failed to achieve a new, distinct and flowing cinematic language. The film is also part docudrama using brief scenes from *Nightwatching* to develop his arguments, and also providing dramatisations especially for the documentary. Rembrandt remains an ordinary man, as Van Gogh does in Pialat's film. He is not prepossessing to look at and soon discloses his sensuality, his arrogance and seems proud of his lack of education. He has a morbid fear of going blind and displays a distinct lack of business sense. He is redeemed by a strong moral feeling towards society (which is at the back of his insistent probing of the possible murder mystery) and a total honesty, expressed as a bluntness often extending to rudeness. Greenaway maintains the audience's distance from the man. He is not treated particularly sympathetically and he is shown as an anachronism, a very modern man in speech, ideas, and demeanour, rather trapped in a seventeenth-century charade.

The interplay of art and cinema environments may be the way forward for those biopic directors wanting to cover high-art subjects rather than catering for mainstream taste. Greenaway has used a huge industrial hanger in Zagreb in which to create elaborate set-pieces and 3D effects for his latest film, another artist biopic, *Goltzius and the Pelican Company*. Goltzius, the watercolour artist of erotic scenes, made a journey to Italy in 1590. Greenaway imagines him stopping in Colmar and soliciting the Margrave of Alsace to pay for a printing press to print adult illuminated copies of the Old Testament and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. He succeeds in striking a bargain with the Margrave, whereby he will get the money for his printing press if his company entertain the Court for six nights by re-enacting stories from the Bible depicting sexual taboos.³⁴⁰ From viewing a trailer preview it appears the film incorporates lots of post-production work such as cursive handwriting scrolling across the screen together with what Bell (2013: 1) describes as a continual shading or 'ripple effect' as if peering into a lazily stirred cauldron. At the Rome Film Festival premiere at least a third of the audience had left within the first hour, put-off by a more extreme form of the standard Greenaway staples of a heavily stylised

340 The stories to be acted are the incest of Lot and his daughters, David and Bathsheba, Samson and Delilah and Joseph and Potiphar from the Old Testament, plus John the Baptist and Salome from the New Testament. (Bell, 2013: 1).

technique (very intellectual rather than emotional), very explicit violence and a pornographic level of sexual frankness (Brooks, 2012: 1)³⁴¹. Despite this, Greenaway is already planning a third instalment of his 'Dutch Master' film series, on Hieronymus Bosch, with a release to coincide with the 500th anniversary of his death in 2016.

Chapter 7.4. Joyce Wieland.

Artist/directors have also been keen to use the framework of an artist biopic to make some emphatic political points that they feel very strongly about. Probably the most obvious and well-known example is Jarman's *Caravaggio*. However, this film has already been analysed in some detail in both Chapter 4 and Chapter 6, albeit for other associations, so here Joyce Wieland's *The Far Shore* (1976) will be used as a case study. Wieland's film is very interesting as she attempted to marry the popular film genre of melodrama with avant-garde structural filmmaking techniques. She hoped thereby to gain a wide audience but the film failed on its first release in terms of both box-office receipts and critical reception. However, the film has since been re-assessed and its themes, particularly the eco-political and feminist, have been seen as remaining directly relevant to the 2010s. Despite its flaws it is now considered a seminal Canadian film.³⁴²

Wieland had a hard childhood, being orphaned at an early age and subsequently reliant on her much older sister. However, her sister supported her education at the Central Technical High School in Toronto, and after graduation she had a brief spell at Graphic Films working on animation (where she met her future husband, Michael Snow), and then was quickly taken up by the Here and Now Gallery in 1958, followed by the prestigious Isaacs Gallery in 1960. Her bright, sexually explicit paintings won a following all over North America. Her paintings were already referential to filmmaking, *First*

341 Perhaps Greenaway takes solace from his earlier pronouncement that "My audience is comprised of three categories. The first category contains the people who decide after the first five minutes that they've made a mistake and leave. The second category is the people who give the film a chance and leave annoyed after 40 minutes: The third category includes people that watch the whole film and return to see it again. If I'm able to persuade 33% of the audience to stay, then I can say that I've succeeded" (Greenaway Quotes, n.d. : 2).

342 This was already taken for granted by contributors to Kathryn Elder's (1999) collection of essays. It has since been confirmed by the appearance of Sloan's (2010) monograph on this single film.

Integrated Film with a Short on Sailing (1963) being the most complex of her series involving sinking ships, taking the form of a filmstrip in which a short story was told. Here two narratives unfold simultaneously, one running horizontally (the sinking ship), the other vertically (a white woman and a black man kissing). These were incorporated into a long vertical format, not traditionally used in painting, but reminiscent of a strip of celluloid with a sequence of still images which could be fed through a machine to create the illusion of movement (Sloan, 2010: 28). Michael Snow suggested the couple move to New York in 1963, where he subsequently became a leading structuralist filmmaker. Wieland attended the informal gatherings based around Jonas Mekas and began to make her own films as well as collaborating with Snow. These soon showed a mix of social and political critique that was to become a constant feature in her work (Melnyk, 2004: 190-191). However, with her marriage in difficulties, she moved back to Toronto in 1971, partly because she felt humiliated at not being included in the Anthology Film Archives 'Essential Cinema' collection set-up in New York in 1970 to preserve and exhibit experimental film (Lind, 2001: 194).

The Far Shore is Wieland's longest film at ninety-seven minutes. "It brought together all Wieland's previous work on feminist, environmentalist and nationalist perspectives – for which she was famous in the experimental realm" (Armatage, 1989: 93).³⁴³ These basic influences from her art work did not form easy bed-fellows. There was her experience of being at the centre of the New York structuralist school of filmmakers in the 1960s, who were advocating a stark unemotional look at the world around the filmmaker, as against her interest as a feminist in what were usually seen as distinctly traditional women's hand-crafts associated with homemaking where there is an inbuilt emotional attachment to the home and family.³⁴⁴ Wieland worked in needlecraft, quilting, knitted wall hangings, embroideries and hooked rugs, even cake decoration and

343 For some years it was developed under the same title as her famous quilt work and exhibition title *True Patriot Love*, again suggesting a continuity in her total output (Grace, 2004: 127).

344 Wieland's early films also portray the artisanal or 'home-made' aspects of filmmaking (Marchessault, 1999: 140), from the depiction of kitchen objects such as crockery, rubber gloves or a tea pot in *Water Sark* (1964-1965), to the actual deployment of hand-made effects to the physical film, as in the use of dyes and perforation by quilting needle in *Hand-Tinting* (1967-1968). It is not therefore surprising that Wieland next turned to women's genres to put across the messages in her films, with fairy-tales in *Rat Life and Diet in North America* (1968) and melodrama in *The Far Shore*.

perfume, and employed prize-winning craftswomen to follow her designs and supplement her own contribution. This collaborative approach meant that “By hiring women who otherwise practised their art as a leisure activity, Wieland attempted to legitimise the place of women’s domestic craft heritage within arts institutions” (Rabinovitz, 1991: 185). These influences were then brought together around the life of Canadian painter Tom Thomson (1877-1917), who was called Tom MacLeod in the film, but it was made plain both in publicity for the film and by the very adoption of an outline of Thomson’s life story for the film’s plot, that it was an *a-clef* for Thomson, and this was taken for granted by those writing about the film.³⁴⁵

The Far Shore was already in development at the time Wieland returned to live in Canada.³⁴⁶ Extracts from a screenplay were incorporated within her Ottawa exhibition, *True Patriot Love* which was part of the National Gallery of Canada’s Ottawa Festival in the summer of 1971 and was their first one-woman show by a living artist. The film has three major themes. The first, feminist, narrative revolves around Eulalie, a young Québécoise bride who is brought back to Toronto by her engineer husband who can barely communicate with her and just wants what nowadays is termed ‘a trophy wife’. This also provides the opportunity to explore the relations between Canadian English and French cultures and history (Reid, 1999: 8). She is formally manager of a large household but in practice has nothing to do except play the piano, which indicates her artistic sensibility. Then Tom Macleod enters her life, embodying the spirit and masculinity of the vast Northern Canadian outdoors. He is being recruited by her husband to help survey the mineral wealth of the Northern wilderness, which introduces Wieland’s concerns for the environment and an intense nationalism. Eulalie falls passionately in love and eventually risks all by running off with him into the wild. Wieland is free to impose her own version of Tom Thomson onto this imaginary character as so little is known of his real life. Just as

345 This is obvious in the material published during the periods of intense media interest during both the production and upon the film’s opening, with 30 articles appearing in popular magazines in 1976 alone (Zryd, 1999: 198). Reproductions of Thomson’s artworks were used to stand in for MacLeod’s in the film, most notably *The West Wind* (1917) which is shown full-on on an easel when he is painting from life on the lakeshore and Tom delivers *The Jack Pine* (1916-1917) to a mansion in Rosedale, Toronto.

346 Michael Snow was also interested in the same subject, referring to the Group of Seven in his *La Région central* (1971) (Melnik, 2004: 188). Wieland placed British Columbian artist Emily Carr in love with Tom Thomson in her first script of *The Far Shore*, later dropping Carr but retaining the idea of two people involved in the arts as lovers (Lind, 2001: 210).

he was making an artistic reputation among the band of painters that were to become the famous Group of Seven,³⁴⁷ he disappeared while on a painting trip in Canoe Lake, Algonquin Park, Ontario in 1917. His battered body was found in his canoe without any signs of drowning. Wieland has her film end with both Eulalie and Tom being shot to death in their canoe after a chase by her husband and his business partner.

With her return to Canada and the display of her solidly nationalist work in the *True Patriot Love* exhibition Wieland was quickly adopted by the media as the quintessential woman Canadian artist. Wieland kept to her principles and insisted that *The Far Shore* was an entirely Canadian film not only in subject matter but also in financing and in the employment of both actors and crew (Rabinovitz, 1982: 110). She also clung to her collaborative style and communicated her desired effects by detailed drawings as storyboards for each scene³⁴⁸, helping to give the film its beauty, sensuousness, voluptuous colour, light form and texture, all of which were already present in her earlier film work (Reid, 1999: 8).

To choose Thomson as a central character was to plug into his status as iconic Northern Canadian, which is easy to underestimate by those outside the country. In the public imagination he had already gone through several series of representations over the last 90 years as interpreted by many visual artists, biographers, playwrights, poets,

347 The Group of Seven (aka the Alonquin School) were a group of Canadian landscape painters from 1920 to 1933, originally consisting of Franklin Carmichael (1890–1945), Lawren Harris (1885–1970), A. Y. Jackson (1882–1972), Frank Johnston (1888–1949), Arthur Lismer (1885–1969), J. E. H. MacDonald (1873–1932), and Frederick Varley (1881–1969). Later, A. J. Casson (1898–1992) was invited to join in 1926; Edwin Holgate (1892–1977) became a member in 1930; and LeMoine Fitzgerald (1890–1956) joined in 1932. Two artists commonly associated with the group are Tom Thomson (1877–1917) and Emily Carr (1871–1945). Although he died before its official formation, Thomson had a significant influence on the group. In his essay "The Story of the Group of Seven", Lawren Harris wrote that Thomson was "a part of the movement before we pinned a label on it"; Thomson's paintings *The West Wind* and *The Jack Pine* are two of the group's most iconic pieces ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_of_Seven_\(artists\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_of_Seven_(artists)) Accessed 01/05/2013), and are both used in *The Far Shore*. The Group is usually seen as the first artistic movement in Canada to radically break from the colonial influence of the European 'academy' style by making very subjective interpretations of the Canadian landscape, stressing its distinctiveness and uniqueness (Longfellow, 1999: 170).

348 This was an unusual practice at the time. Over 2000 storyboards were purchased by the National Gallery of Canada for \$27,400 in April 1979, which provided an income for Wieland while she coped with separating from Michael Snow (Lind, 2001: 212, 218, 244).

novelists, art historians, art curators, as well as filmmakers.³⁴⁹ Thomson epitomised a fantasy version of desirable backwoods masculinity as an expert woodsman, canoeist and fisherman inseparable from Alonquin Park, so exhibiting not only manliness but also solitary independence, an intrepid explorer, practical skills and a positive closeness to nature. Through his painting there was also allied a cultural sensibility. While his real life was predicated upon a homosocial society, Wieland brought a new layer of sensitivity and appeal by introducing an affair with another outsider, Eulalie, a French speaking woman marooned in an unhappy marriage in the urban sprawl of Toronto, far from her natural rural home in Quebec. This expansion of Thomson's social milieu provides the added appeal of what Grace (2004: 128) calls a feminist Tom Thomson. Eulalie's melodramatic defection to Tom signals that his life and art will irrevocably change as well as hers. His life is to be rewritten through his infatuation with her, to be with her is also his prime concern as he too needs to move on to a greater fulfilment of sorts, beyond his solitary woodsman life. He loses some of his solitariness and dedication to the wilderness and becomes both domesticated and eroticised (Grace, 2004: 128).

The centrality of the character and the melodramatic and unexpected reaction of Eulalie simply to his presence near to her in the wilderness but frustratingly unobtainable, results in the political message linked to Thomson's activities becoming the dominant message within the film. The film's romantic storyline is used to hide, or make the political content acceptable. Thomson is seen as a modern 'eco warrior', concerned at the potential thoughtless mass destruction of the wilderness in the North by corporate conglomerates eager to exploit the region's mineral resources. This concern over the environmental effects of an ill thought out exploitation of Canada's natural resources was a pre-occupation from Wieland's contact with the New Left movements of the 1960s and 1970s (Sloan, 2010: 16). It extended to the position of native people, who were also being exploited, and was also linked to a fear that Canada was losing sovereignty in its own affairs to its neighbour the United States. So Tom Thomson's story was treated as a revisionist history, showing how a historical situation also illuminated a contemporary

349 The resulting multi-levels have been revealed by Grace (2004: 9-13) who distinguishes Thomson as legend, mythic figure and a symbol and confirms that "Thomson is the most invented and re-invented Canadian of all" (Grace, 2004: 10).

crisis.³⁵⁰ The first half of *The Far Shore* is very slow paced and deliberate, using repeated motifs, figurations and gestures, slow camera movements and distinctive edits and dissolves. However, once all the characters are gathered together in the North country, so the pace changes to quick and melodramatic action as the tensions erupt and lust, anger and violence come to the fore to provide the audience with strong emotional responses.

The conclusion of the film sees the feminist message reduced to a secondary status. Not only is Eulalie killed, but where Tom's bloody body remains in sight floating on the surface, her body is absent as if she has not really been there. Only her hat drifts by on the current while she has become both silent and forgotten, without any lasting effect, just leaving a haunting sense of melancholy and loss.³⁵¹ Her brief escape to happiness has altered nothing in the social situation of Canadian women but in Tom's corpse left visibly drifting in the canoe there is suggested the important loss of a round in the on-going battle for survival of the Canadian wilderness and its peoples as well as the triumph of patriarchy. Eulalie's absence in the final images prevents the standard narrative closure within melodrama; nor does she return to the fold in a domestic context as is usual in this genre. If there is any feminist triumph it can only be as Rabinovitz (1987: 6) suggests that her presence has been so powerful she cannot integrate at all into the existing patriarchal order and has passed on to a better 'far shore' as yet not in existence in the real world.

In telling this tale Wieland was eager to appropriate her concerns for the future of her homeland and the status of women in society and be able to display them directly to her audience rather than risk the loss of control of the project to distributors and other businessmen. While the film opened to poor reviews it got little distribution not only because of this but also because Wieland proved a naïve novice in such matters (Rabinovitz, 1987: 121). The combination of dismissal for the film after very hard and stressful filming and distribution work was to see the withdrawal of Wieland from

350 Here, Thomson's concerns over the lumber and mining industries in the 1910s are seen to be still relevant in modern times in Wieland's campaigning against the hydroelectric scheme proposed for James Bay in North Quebec, which involved the diversion of three rivers and the flooding of 11,500 square kilometres (the size of New York State) belonging to the Cree and Inuit peoples (Sloan, 2010: 73).

351 The symbolic importance of the straw hat has been set up during the earlier sequence of Eulalie swimming across the lake to join Tom. Here, however, as it floats a little way behind her but still attached to her neck by a long string, it seems a harbinger of hope and freedom.

filmmaking for ten years.³⁵² Her stress whilst filming partly arose from Wieland's unorthodox directing style for a large scale commercial product. She had difficulty in remoulding her usual collaborative approach to being a leader and making tough decisions, especially on keeping within a finite budget (Lind, 2001: 224).³⁵³ To be fair, Wieland and Steed had little past examples to draw upon as only two women before Wieland had made a feature in English Canada.³⁵⁴ The film's reputation was reassessed initially owing to American critics' approval of her feminist stance starting in the 1980s, particularly Rabinovitz (1982, 1987, 1991) and then continuing with the Canadian Armatage (1989, 2007 and 2010) and Sloan (2010).

Wieland attempted to reach out to an audience beyond that associated with the avant-garde film movement. She felt her themes were so important they should form the basis for a discussion at a national level (Melnyk, 2004: 192 and Sloan, 2010: 16). On a technical level she incorporated many techniques associated with silent films which she had already borrowed in her paintings from the 1960s and used them to complement the 1919 time setting of *The Far Shore*: in particular, her use of an iris shot to both highlight detail and also move on the narrative.³⁵⁵ She also recalls the standard chase scenes of early comedies in the rapid cross-cutting and increasing tempo of the pursuit of Eulalie and Tom by Eulalie's husband, Ross. While this style may also be paying homage to D. W.

352 She complained that "I think I used up a basic energy on that film" (quoted in Zyrd, 1999: 201). Even five years after its premiere, Wieland was calling her work on the film "a form of madness...a very dangerous extension of energy; my energy got where I almost couldn't get it back" (quoted in Lind, 2001: 233).

353 Wieland's idea of helping the actors was to play them Debussy to set a mood to convey the essence of a scene. To the actors this just appeared vague and they turned to cinematographer Richard Leiterman to confirm if they had achieved what she really wanted (Lind, 2001: 220). However, all the personnel on the set that Lind (2001: 217) interviewed emphasised that there was a very special and positive creational atmosphere on the production and that this was largely due to Wieland's personality and determination.

354 According to Armatage (1989) these were Nell Shipman (*Back to God's Country*, 1919) and Sylvia Spring (*Madelaine Is...*, 1969).

355 For example, after Tom has left to go to the North, about two-thirds into the film, Eulalie is shown lying on a bed feeling depressed and the camera irises down framing her face in an extreme close-up. The shot dissolves into a white disc on which is superimposed the image of a canoe, drifting across a lake, but still within the iris. The camera then irises out to reveal Tom in a canoe and then the landscape fills the entire frame. The whole sequence of dissolves and irises links the two characters romantically though they are far apart (Longfellow, 1992: 52) and suggests they are both at one with the wilderness landscape. The technique also suggests it is a sexual daydream for Eulalie. Also during the dissolve a red and white rim or frame appears around the white iris, which links the couple to the colours of the Canadian flag, a typical use of the use of colour for nationalistic sentiments in Wieland's artwork (Rabinovitz, 1987: 6).

Griffiths's use of parallel action, the introduction of a formula associated with light comedy in the midst of impending tragedy was very jarring for audiences. The incongruity is emphasised by the use of generic type silent film chase music.³⁵⁶

Wieland did not abandon her structuralist experience entirely. Rabinovitz (1987: 5) points out that these structuralist tendencies act as poetic devices rather than giving new narrative information or character insights, so the film's narrative line is undermined. For example:

Repetitive cutaway shots that are extreme close-ups of carpets, paintings, and embroideries are used on the narrative level to bridge spatio-temporal ellipses. On the symbolic level, the objects (all works of art) function as leitmotifs intertwining Eulalie's and Tom's identification with artistic activity as a way to spiritual redemption. The close-ups are so magnified that they emphasise the material quality of the images – texture, hue, reflection of light, formal arrangements. [But, as in her structural experimental films, the] magnification deconstructs the photographic reality and makes the objects signify their own physical compositions (Rabinovitz, 1987: 4).

Overall, however, the film is not quite as avant-garde as contemporary critics suggested, with its main arc following a quite conventional treatment.

Wieland did add to her style repertoire the use of melodrama to bring out her feminist message, although this aspect of the film was largely ignored at the time of its release. Wieland gradually came round to exploiting melodrama as an essential way of performing her film when sources of finance for a more experimental type of film proved very wary of wanting to invest in such a production (Rabinovitz, 1987: 121).³⁵⁷ It was the

356 Two extended musical interludes within the film also cause an imbalance by bringing the narrative to a halt for several minutes at a time. Eulalie and Tom sing a very long ballad, while Tom joins in a country dance to a fiddler playing a traditional tune when he visits a family he knows who live permanently in the wilderness. While these sequences show the lover's rapport, Tom's musical sensitivity and the good old fashioned values of the settlers they are so extended they feel more like a means to extend the running time of the film.

357 Her associate, Judy Steed, has described how Wieland's original ideas for the film were quite surreal, with, for example, even though it was meant to be 1919, love letters between Tom and Eulalie were to be dropped by aeroplane. In practice such indulgencies proved too expensive (Scott, 1987: 27; Lind, 2001: 222, 228). The Canadian Film Development Corporation initially proposed partly funding a budget of \$115,000, which, by persistence, was gradually raised to \$300,000 to ensure a period film could be properly dressed. Half of this had to be raised from private investors. The largest donation from an individual was

unusual mixture of the two styles, structuralism and melodrama, which confounded the expectations of audiences. The film was rejected as being too populist by the avant-garde, as it was too far removed from their usual diet of low-budget, short, anti-narrative, personal films. At the same time it was too high-brow for the mainstream, being both short on narrative and immersed in a dense visual symbolism. Wieland got little sympathy, and was seen as simply out of her depth over attempting such a large project by many critics. It was even held up to ridicule by Ord (1977: 41) who giggled throughout because her characters “talked like no one I had ever heard in my life, like slogans out of a badly written political pamphlet”.³⁵⁸ On the whole I would agree with Lind (2001: 230) that for a general public the painterly quality of a few “memorably beautiful scenes did not make up for an unsatisfactory script and... stiff and awkward characters”. While the critic Robert Fulford could welcome the film as “a triumph of Wielandism” (quoted in Lind, 2001: 230),³⁵⁹ there was only a limited audience for such sophistication. While the Canadian press led the public’s interest in her personal life and personality, this did not necessarily result in a similar interest in her art (Rabinovitz, 1991: 11).³⁶⁰

In 1987, however, the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), Toronto gave Wieland the first career- long exhibition ever mounted for a living female Canadian artist. As part of this her whole output was re-evaluated and the importance of *The Far Shore* to the development of Canadian filmmaking was firmly established. As viewed by Rabinovitz,(1987: 1),the way this radical feminist polemic engages and critiques both Hollywood and experimental film styles by the use of melodrama, offers an easy way into Wieland’s political concerns of a new vision of landscape, a reflection on gender relations, and an alternative take on Canadian nationalism. Wieland declared that “All the art I’ve

\$20,000. Institutional investors included The Toronto Star, Famous Players and Baton Broadcasting (Lind, 2001: 214-215).

358 Ord (1977: 41) went on to broaden his argument saying, “mostly I giggled because if I hadn’t I would have been very angry that Joyce Wieland had taken someone like Tom Thomson and made him into a sponge for all her fantasies about Art, and for all her neuroses about men, and for that sappy complacent kind of Canadian nationalism that has made just about every feature film made in English Canada appear ridiculous”.

359 Fulford summarised the qualities in her work as “innocence, naïve and sentimental charm, sexuality, melancholic romanticism, blatant symbolism, parody, ecology and art” (quoted in Lind, 2001: 230).

360 A contrary view is expressed in Arthur (2007:63), whose analysis of 330 articles suggested about two-thirds were in academic or respected cultural journals.

been doing or will be doing is about Canada" (quoted in Melnyk, 2004: 193) and Moses (1975: 41) mentions one audience member on the film's original release highly praising the film because "It is uniquely Canadian. It gives that feeling". By the turn of the century Nowell (2001: 295) could sum up her status: "Wieland is now a feminist/nationalist icon, a curious yet provocative mix of what has been termed 'female aesthetic' and self-conscious Canadianism". She is also seen as the precursor of an independent female cinema of the 1980s, with, for example, both Laura Mulvey in the United Kingdom and Yvonne Rainer in the United States acknowledging their debt to her (Rabinovitz, 1987: 120).

Chapter 7.5. Charles Matton, Julian Schnabel, and Derek Jarman.

Not all the films by artist directors have been as innovative and unique as those discussed so far. With the *Rembrandt* of Charles Matton and *Basquiat* by Julian Schnabel we see a much more conventional approach to the artist biopic, although for both their films are closely connected to their artistic output. Matton is most well-known for his 'boxes' or miniature rooms. This technique flows over into his filmmaking in general with his penchant for detail, and in *Rembrandt* there is frequent visual referral to a scale model of Rembrandt's house to establish the location of the action. There is also a most detailed full-scale set of the street outside the house. This is, from the opening of the film, very obviously a studio creation, as Rembrandt disembarks from a boat docking on a canal in an outside location shot. He then turns into the studio set which is packed with actors carrying out the trades of the time. Matton was born in 1933, a native of Paris, and exhibited his paintings in the early 1960s.³⁶¹ However, he then turned to magazine illustration and book publishing, only re-emerging as a public artist in 1983 and producing his first three-dimensional 'boxes' in 1985 as a working tool, as models towards visualising how to carry out his painting and filmmaking and also as a means of self-help in relieving the symptoms of his schizophrenia. The first public exhibition of this new form was in 1987 at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. Because of this specific use for the boxes, his wife Sylvie (quoted in Matton, 2011b:18) says he preferred to label himself as a

³⁶¹ These shows were a success and he was bought by among others, Simone Signoret, Yves Montand and Françoise Sagan (Hurwitz, 2008: 114).

“manufacturer of images” rather than a painter, sculptor, draftsman, photographer, or film director, all of which he practiced. He was another ‘Polytech’ to rank alongside Greenaway or Majewski (Spero, 2011: 1). Sylvie Matton (2011b: 18) goes on to suggest that he saw the boxes as, “Serving as a new medium – a link in the chain joining not only painting, drawing and sculpture, but also painting and film – the boxes were thought of, above all, by their creator as microcosms of art”.

Matton’s boxes are a standard two cubic feet with glass fronts or sitting in glass vitrines, using a scale of 1:7. They each portray a scene devoid of humans, whom it is felt have just left the frame. There are some affinities to the work of 1930s artist and filmmaker Joseph Cornell, but Matton was not interested in working with ‘found’ items and created all his own pieces so they are closer to the world of Lewis Carroll and stage design (Mullarkey, 2008: 1).³⁶² Many of the boxes were homages to artists and other leading figures in their field whom he revered including Sigmund Freud’s study and Francis Bacon’s studio and a series of famous people’s libraries, including that of James Joyce. Each room incorporated a miniature painting, or in later series a sculpture, again invoking both a homage to the individual genius and a chance to work through those parts of art history that he most respected.³⁶³

In connection with *Rembrandt*, released in 1999, Matton showed at two Parisian galleries. The “Matton-Rembrandt” exhibition at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, June 23-September 5th, showed how he used boxes in his work with the photographing of the finished product, giving him complete control over the results by varying the lighting or colouring,. Each box provided up to sixty different variations that Matton considered of sufficient interest to consider using as a basis for his work (Hurwitz, 2008: 114).³⁶⁴ Hurwitz considers that it is the act of working on the boxes that gives

362 As a miniaturist Matton was insistent on correct detail. He designed, drew, built, sculpted and painted each piece included in the display, even down to pipes, electric sockets, switches, with all their smears and wear and tear.

363 The boxes evolved over time and came to include ‘illusions’ in the form of fake mirrors which reflected identical elements arranged on each side of the box, so extending the volume of the box but avoiding a reflection from the viewers’ gaze.

364 “Deux ou trois choses que je sais de Rembrandt et de quelques autres”, at the Galerie Beaubourg, September- October, included a box displaying Rembrandt’s studio. In later years, after building sixty boxes, Matton turned to experimental use of three dimensional stereoscopic photography of

Rembrandt the film not only its visual sumptuousness but also its emotional complexity and slightly troubling nature. Matton himself said "I hope to disturb, to upset, to create a disturbance that makes us question not only our ways of seeing but the very definition of reality" (quoted in Hurwitz, 2008: 115).

Schnabel is also pre-occupied with the accuracy of his *mise-en-scène*, having been actually involved in the New York art scene during Basquiat's career and known the artist at first hand, even if not as a close friend. Indeed, he said that, "Originally I had no intention of directing that movie. I really got forced into it to make sure the story was told in the right way" (quoted in Hoban, 1998: 335). He was surrounded by other people on the set who had met Warhol, in particular Dennis Hopper playing the art dealer Bruno Bischofberger and David Bowie playing Warhol himself, and they could also keep his interpretation as accurate as possible (Spitz, 2010: 170). Schnabel's own first New York gallery showing was in 1979 which is the year that *Basquiat* begins (Nesbit, 2006a: 1). Schnabel himself is portrayed in the film under the guise of artist Arthur Milo, played by Gary Oldman, together with his own daughter appearing in a cameo role (Nesbit, 2006a: 2). In this alter-ego Milo is portrayed as an expert on Basquiat (Hoban, 1998: 336). Schnabel was refused permission by the Basquiat estate to reproduce his paintings so he, with some assistants, ended up having to create those displayed in the film (Hoban, 1998: 337).³⁶⁵ In fact Schnabel was part of a move of several leading artists in the American art scene of the 1980s who turned to mainstream cinema in the 1990s, crossing the boundary between high art and popular culture.³⁶⁶ While there may have been an element of such artists being attracted by money and prestige in filmmaking, Dika (2012: 183) suggests that such artists were already so rich and powerful within their own practices that it was more of a case that they entered mainstream cinema simply because it was open to them.

his interiors as another step nearer to approximating reality and making the viewer look more closely and analytically at his productions. Matton (2011a) illustrates a sample of these, and provides a 3-D viewer.

365 Jeffrey Wright who played Basquiat considers the whole film was about aggrandising Schnabel through Basquiat's memory, which led Schnabel in his script to make Basquiat too passive and too much of a victim, whereas he was really quite 'dangerous' (Hoban, 1998: 336). Schnabel bought the project off Lech Majewski for \$50,000 after Majewski had called to interview him about Basquiat in preparation for a biopic (Hoban, 1998: 335).

366 For example, Robert Longo for *Johnny Mnemonic* (1995); David Salle for *Search and Destroy* (1995); Larry Clark for *Kids* (1995); Cindy Sherman for *Office Killer* (1997) (O'Pray, 1997: 1).

Schnabel was interested in exposing the creative process together with the character of the artist, and continued to pursue these themes in his subsequent films while also exploring the sensuality and dynamism of the image (Dika, 2012: 184, 205). For example, in *Basquiat* he successfully incorporates an often quoted passage of magical realism as Basquiat looks up at the sky over Manhattan and it turns into a huge Pacific wave with a surfer dancing on its surface. Schnabel has continued to paint, and combine it with filmmaking, because "I am a painter. I always paint" (quoted in Giloy-Hirtz, 2010: 13). He believes that, "The core of everything that I do comes from being a painter, and probably the reason for whatever qualities my movies have comes from a perspective as a painter (quoted in Giloy-Hirtz 2010: 14).³⁶⁷ This intricate relationship between his art and his filmmaking has been analysed in depth through the exhibition, *Julian Schnabel: Art and Film*, held at the Art Gallery of Ontario from September 2010 through January 2011, which surveyed the connections via his paintings since the mid-1970s (Moos, 2010).

Jarman, too, was producing a distinct series of art works while engaged in the preparation and filming for *Caravaggio*. He combined his obsession about Caravaggio with his other lifelong interests in alchemy and politics. There is a direct homage to Caravaggio in *The Caravaggio Suite* of 1986 comprising nine small mixed media pieces. They are typical of the series of black and gold paintings he had been working on since 1982, which he began to use up a supply of gold leaf left over from his stage designs for *The Rake's Progress* (Wollen, 1996b: 25). The gold leaf, and later gold paint as a substitute, covered the surface of the canvas and then black paint was applied, thickly enough to contain found objects such as nails, a protractor, old Coke tins, condoms, rusty nails and, his trademark, and often golden, shattered glass.³⁶⁸ Designs and text were then sometimes scratched through the paint as well. *The Suite* in particular used knives and parts of knives, referring back to Caravaggio's fondness for his knife shown in the film, on

³⁶⁷ This becomes even more manifested in his later work. For *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (2007), as one reviewer puts it, "It's almost as if Schnabel has actually found a way to paint with the camera, fragmenting the image with blurry double exposures, gestural swipes and blurry shutter effects" (quoted in Giloy-Hirtz, 2010: 14).

³⁶⁸ Jarman may have been influenced by Julian Schnabel's exhibition of broken-plate paintings which had recently had a London exhibition (Iles, 2008: 67).

which is written, *Nec spe nec metu* (No hope no fear). The carefully chosen text written into the surface, and shadowy figures, all provide clues to the works' relationship to Caravaggio, while the style in general, which he explored for a number of years from the early 1980s, contains spiritual and inspirational influences from Caravaggio's work. Jarman used black because he saw it as "the colour that binds the universe: it is all infinity: the void that binds everything. And here in this darkness there are many possibilities. The boundaries are defined by found objects from my world" (quoted in Asai, 1990: 52). He believed that "things shine out of the darkness and so the very nature of black means that you actually see things better" (quoted in Peake, 1999: note p. 559). In October 1987 Richard Salmon offered Jarman a gallery show which was entitled *Paintings from a Year*. It featured the entire output of 132 canvases that Jarman had produced in the last fourteen months. They were hung in eight symmetrical groups in the style of a Victorian display but there were few customers or even reviews in the art press (Peake, 1999: 408).

Chapter 7.6. Conclusion.

The close connection between a director's art work and his cinematic work is immediately apparent for all these artist/directors of artist biopics. Whether this leads them deeper into the political or psychological aspects of the film's personal subject, or to an obsession with achieving a flawless *mise-en-scène* for an accurate reproduction of life at the time, often by experimenting with the latest technology to achieve a new level of veracity, obviously varies from director to director. What all the artist/directors have in common is a high quality of output that has given the films both critical acclaim and in some cases also controversy. It has also resulted in films of an intense passion, though this is no guarantee of financial or critical success. For example, *Basquiat* was fortunate in being promoted by Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, so gaining a relatively wide distribution within the art house circuit, while *The Mill and the Cross* on the other hand could never be seen as gaining large audiences because of its more difficult subject matter and underlying experimental cinematic structure. The very fact that famous artists are more than just willing, indeed are eager, to participate in the genre helps to raise its status for it to be taken more seriously at an academic level. This may be a slow process,

and for such as *The Far Shore* it has only come about after a reassessment of the artist/director's oeuvre and the interplay of art and cinema within their work, but the dedication of Greenaway and Majewski suggests it will nevertheless continue into the future.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

The intention of this thesis has been to show, possibly for the first time in such detail, the emergence and historical development of the artist biopic in Europe and North America since the 1930s as a recognised sub-genre of the biopic, which has been influenced over time by a varying combination of technical, political, social, economic and cultural developments. Alongside these as a whole there has emerged a more widespread adoption of a psychological approach to the individual artist's personal narrative together with a readiness to explore new ways of presenting both an artists' life and their works of art.

The number and range of artist biopics has made it impossible to include them all; rather, their on-going history has been examined by grouping films together as case studies according to a predominant linked theme that occurred at a particular moment and which encapsulates continuing matters of concern, both relating to film as an industry and as an artistic endeavour, as outlined below.

It has been shown (in Chapter 2.1.) how the early promise of *Rembrandt* (1936) was initially a false start owing to its poor box-office takings, and the genre was not revived until the fascist nations of Germany and Italy adopted it as part of their use of popular media for propaganda purposes (see Chapter 2.2). An association of the genre with the defeated Axis nations may well have delayed its revival after the Second World War, but it regained favour with the Hollywood studios particularly owing to the financial success of *Moulin Rouge* (1952) and *Lust for Life* (1956), which was allied to their use of new colour film stocks, larger screens, and intelligent adult storylines (in Chapter 2.3).

The 1960s and 1970s saw the artist biopic being used as a vehicle to debate the role of the artist within a socialist society (see Chapter 2.4). At the time, the historical parallels in films such as *Andrei Rublev* (1966) and *Goya – oder Der arge Weg der Erkenntnis* (1971) dominated critical discussion of them. From a longer perspective it is possible to re-evaluate their artistic merits and see them as key works of the foremost directors from their respective countries.

The early 1970s also saw the flowering of some British low-budget experimental films that were to have an influence on European filmmakers in particular (see Chapter 2.5.). Out of television work, mainly of a documentary format, three directors in particular made a very distinctive contribution to the artist biopic. Ken Russell with *Savage Messiah* (1972), Jack Hazan with *A Bigger Splash* (1974), and Peter Watkins with *Edvard Munch* (1974), were able to experiment with little outside interference owing to the minimum financial investment. In particular there was a playing with an admixture of the documentary and the fictional, a loosening of narrative structure, and the layering and overlapping of the soundtrack.

From the 1980s, as costs began to increase, the marketplace for the artist biopic changed yet again, as it did for film production in general (see Chapter 2.6). The slow imposition of the need for financing from more than one source, often on a multi-national or pan-European basis, was to bring about the development of several niche markets based on the festival circuit and the rise of the art-house theatre and at the same time contributed towards a tendency to cater for a transnational audience rather than exhibit a nationalistic or political bias.

Today, the artist biopic continues to flourish, exhibiting a great variety in its output within which I have chosen to explore a number of themes, each of which adds to the data concerning the changing representation of the artist. The depiction of Van Gogh has been analysed because he is often referred to as the most iconic painter worldwide whose works are probably the most reproduced in the whole world, and who also exemplifies in public imagination the legendary 'mad genius' brand of artist (see Chapter 3). This type of analysis needs also be undertaken for Rembrandt and Goya, who have come to represent beacons of liberty and justice in several films each.³⁶⁹ Dalí and Warhol have also each been interpreted several times among more modern artists. While Gauguin appears as an important catalyst within the life of Van Gogh, he too has had

³⁶⁹ The Rembrandt biographies have concentrated on the travails of his old age but Franses (2013:457-458) has argued that the peak period of creativity for modern painters, as measured by the current value of their paintings, is age 42.

enough treatments as the main subject of a biography to warrant his own profile.³⁷⁰ Van Gogh shows how both the financial backers of films and the public are keen to return to familiar biographies, which have generated their own tropes and myths or legends. While overall the impression remains that artists are indeed beyond or above the rules of civilised society and are wild by his/her very nature, it is not surprising that there is little interest from a cinematic point of view in depicting those of a more sober disposition. The genre perpetuates the extremes, whether sexual, alcoholic or mental, because the demand for a strong film narrative to secure audiences must nearly always be put first.³⁷¹

As a corollary to the survey of a particular artist over time and place I have explored how the output of artist biopics within a particular country has been manifested (see Chapter 4). The United Kingdom has been used as the main example chiefly because of my familiarity with the structure and output of that film industry. This survey suggests that overall the UK has concentrated on the 'dark side' of artistic genius, even within its comic treatment of artists. Other countries that have sufficient output to warrant a similar comparative analysis, would be France, Spain, Germany, Italy or the United States, where differing historical and artistic institutions give rise to a very different approach to the artist biopic.³⁷²

One of the most important debates in recent years has taken place around questions of gender and sexuality. The representation of women artists has been much contested, even though films with a female focus remain a low percentage of total production: the difficulty being that women artists have generally been given a negative rather than a positive image (see Chapter 5). This contrasts with the more positive reception of the gay artist, represented in a sufficient number of films to warrant designation as a sub-sub-genre (see Chapter 6). While also in Chapter 5 I have briefly

370 It is remarkable perhaps that Gauguin has been portrayed at different stages in his life by both Donald Sutherland in *The Wolf at the Door* (1986) and his son Kiefer Sutherland in *Paradise Found* (2003).

371 A start has been made in looking at these wider topics from a Francophone point of view in the essays collected by Thivat (2011).

372 Output is listed by country in App.E. Work on the French biopic as a whole has begun with the publication of Moine (2010) and Thivat (2007 and 2010). Some examples of key works from the East have been included in the Filmography to indicate what is available, but a full comparison between cultures lies outside the remit of this thesis.

looked at the depiction of heterosexual couples who are both artists, the role of the muse has been neglected. In recent films such as *Renoir* (2012) there has been a special interest in how a very young model has inspired an artistic genius in his old age.

Another fairly recent development has been the entry of the gallery artist into filmmaking (see Chapter 7) which can be seen as part of the wider development of the artist biopic in moving from a producer's genre to one associated with an auteur director. This can be said to have raised the cultural status of the artist biopic as well as providing a more informed interpretation of the life of the artist. Indeed, overall it is the very passion emanating from the artist biopic that attracts attention. It does not have to be a famous artist directing to create an absorbing film. An outstanding feature of the majority of artist biopics is the enthusiasm brought to the projects by a director or star or producer where the artist can often be taken as their alter-ego. It is generally only because of the intensity of their pre-occupation that the biopics have actually got made. There are a few indifferent examples among such a large output, for example Henry Koster's *The Naked Maja* (1959), where the director is uninspired (see Chapter 2.3). On the other hand there are so many more films such as *Pollock* (2000), *Basquiat* (1996) or Pialat's *Van Gogh* (1991) where strong commitment from those involved in making the film shows through.

Each decade and/or country seems to find something new to interpret in the inspiration of a great artist. In this connection I have already mentioned the range of aspects on which I have chosen to focus. However, this leaves many others of equal interest that remain to be pursued. There is the ethnic minority artist (*Basquiat*, *Pirosmani* (1971), *Charlotte* (1980)): the artist infatuated by the exotic (*The Wolf at the Door*, *Paradise Found*, *The Moon and Sixpence*); the artists' colony, with its intertwining of personal relationships and artistic influences (*Hip Hip Hurray!* (1987) and *Marie Krøyer* (2012) about the artists in Skagen, Denmark and *Summer in February* (2013) on the Newlyn School in Cornwall); the disabled artist (*My Left Foot*, *Moulin Rouge*, *Frida-Naturaleza Vida*); the naïve artist (*My Netifor* (1999), *Séraphine*, *Pirosmani*); the animal artist (*Mazeppa* (1993), *Miss Potter*, *Summer in February*); the comic artist biopic (*Picassos Åventyr* (1978), *The Rebel*, *The Horse's Mouth*); the artist as subject for a musical biography (*Zille und icke* (1983), *Moulin Rouge* (2001)); the photographic artist (*Fur*

(2006), *Everlasting Moments* (2008), *Pecker* (1998), *The Public Eye* (1992)). Several films have made use of animation techniques (*Miss Potter*, *Frida*) to explore the nature of an artist's paintings, two of which feature Picasso (*The Picasso Summer* (1969), *Picassos Äventyr*)

I have deliberately not ventured into the very large topic of literary adaptation beyond indicating when an artist biopic is based upon a (best selling) novel, as so many are. They have also often enlisted non-fiction works as source material, sometimes merely as a way of getting around copyright restrictions or fears of prosecution from an artist's family where the artist's private life could be exposed. I have, as far as possible throughout the thesis, incorporated material relating to the way the artist's works are displayed and placed within the narrative of a biopic as these features so profoundly interface with the reception of both the life and the film as film. However, this exhibition aspect deserves further study. This brings me back to the two very basic considerations laid out in the thesis's Introduction, concerning the display of works of art and the historical accuracy of a film's reconstructions of the past. These two contentious issues now (in 2014) appear to be moving towards a convergence offering the possibility of a greater prestige and critical and academic acceptance being bestowed on the artist biopic. Bingham (2013: 235) also notes:

"A remarkable development of the early twenty-first century thus far has been the phenomenon of filmmakers actually owning the label 'biopic', and even reviewers using the term as an objective descriptor, not an automatic pejorative, as they had for decades before".

Just as in mainstream cinema there has been an acceptance of 'in-depth' movies³⁷³ and a proven audience for satellite transmissions of special events and carefully marketed documentaries, so artist biopics and the work of the gallery artist turned film director show how technical wizardry in presentation coupled with a balance of emotional and historical content can lead to a more satisfying and successful product. For example, Peter Greenaway's *Nightwatching* provides a highly emotional portrait of Rembrandt, which is counterbalanced by the more historical approach provided in his documentary

373 For example, the four hours of *Mesrine* (Jean-François Richet, 2008), the four and a half hours of *Che* (Steven Sonderbergh, 2008) and the five and a half hours of *Carlos* (Oliver Assayas, 2010), which were all shown theatrically in two parts.

on *The Nightwatch* painting, *Rembrandt's J'Accuse*, which was released at the same time and promoted as part of a two disc DVD set, also coinciding with his Dutch art installations (as discussed in Chapter 7.3.). In the longer term this change of attitude needs to be examined against the increasing output of artist biopics made specifically for television, which now seem to receive the critical disdain previously heaped upon the theatrical product, as in the case of the BBC's *The Impressionists* (2006) and Channel 4's *The Yellow House* (2007).

Overall it is difficult to determine if artist biopics have had any real influence over how the artist has been perceived by their audience. Reliable and continuous sets of attendance/box-office figures are hard to obtain. The continual reference in the literature to the impact of *Lust for Life*, *Moulin Rouge* and *Frida* suggest they may have made a difference. The controversy and subsequent publicity around films such as *Love is the Devil* and *A Bigger Splash*, may well have given them significance out of proportion to their audience size. In many ways a survey over the nearly seventy years of the artist biopic suggests a growing respectability for the genre, based on both its source featuring high art together with a willingness of recognised auteur directors and stars to participate in their making. In the 2010s the courting of some of the more experimental output by art galleries and museums can be seen as an acknowledgement of a newly endorsed high cultural status. Certainly the genre is alive and well, maintaining what Ellam (2012: 1) calls a "constant state of creative flux" and continuing to produce several films a year.³⁷⁴

³⁷⁴ For example, in 2013 there was released *Camille Claudel, 1915* (aka *La Créatrice*) (France, Bruno Dumont, 2013), aimed at the art-house market, and *Renoir* (France, Gilles Bourdos, 2012), a very traditional 'cinéma de papa'. The UK had the heritage cinema production *Summer in February* (Christopher Menaul, 2013) exploring the lives of artists in the Cornish Newlyn School and Mike Leigh has just unveiled his portrait of *Mr Turner* at the Cannes Film Festival 2014.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. CHRONOLOGY OF ARTIST BIOPICS

Artists.

1930-49

The Affairs of Cellini (USA, Gregory La Cava, 1934) – [Benvenuto Cellini]

Rembrandt (UK, Alexander Korda, 1936) – [Rembrandt van Rijn]

Un'avventura di Salvator Rosa (Salvator Rosa's Adventure) (Italy, Alessandro Blasetti, 1939)

Sei Bambine e il Perseo (Italy, Giovacchino Forzano, 1939) – [Benvenuto Cellini]

Caravaggio – Il Pittore Maledetto (Italy, Goffredo Alessandrini, 1941) – [Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio]

Andreas Schlüter (Germany, Herbert Maisch, 1942)

Rembrandt (Ewiger Rembrandt) (Germany, Hans Steinhoff, 1942) – [Rembrandt van Rijn]

Das unsterbliche Antlitz (The Immortal Face) (Austria, Géza von Cziffra, 1947) – [Anselm Feuerbach]

L'Ultima Cena (Italy, Luigi Maria Giachino, 1948) – [Leonardo Da Vinci]

1950-1959

Moulin Rouge (UK, John Huston, 1952) – [Toulouse-Lautrec]

Lust for Life (USA, Vincente Minnelli, 1956) – [Vincent Van Gogh]

Montparnasse 19 (Les amants de Montparnasse, France; The Lovers of Montparnasse, UK) (France, Jacques Becker, 1958) – [Modigliani]

Tilman Riemenschneider (East Germany, Helmut Spieß, 1958)

The Naked Maja (USA/Italy, Henry Koster, 1959) – [Goya]

1960-69

Il Magnifico Avventuriero (The Burning of Rome) (Italy/France/Spain, Riccardo Freda, 1963) – [Benvenuto Cellini]

The Agony and the Ecstasy (USA/Italy, Carol Reed, 1965) – [Michelangelo]

Andrei Rublev (USSR, Andrei Tarkovsky, 1966)

El Greco (Italy/France/Spain, Luciano Salce, 1966)

The Picasso Summer (USA, Serge Bourguignon and Robert Sallin, 1969)

1970-79

Goya, historia de una soledad (Spain, Nino Quevedo, 1971)

Goya – oder Der arge Weg der Erkenntnis (The Hard Way to Enlightenment) (GDR, Konrad Wolf, 1971)

Pirosmani (USSR, Georgy Shengelaya, 1971)

Savage Messiah (UK, Ken Russell, 1972) – [Henri Gaudier-Brzeska]

A Bigger Splash (UK, Jack Hazan, 1974) – [David Hockney]

Edvard Munch (Norway/Sweden, Peter Watkins, 1974)

En Busca de un Muro (In Search of a Wall) (Mexico, Julio Bracho, 1974) – [Jose Clemente Orozco]

Aloïse (France, Liliane de Kermadec, 1975) – [Aloïse Corbaz]

Dagny (Dagny- taiteilijaelämää) (Poland/Norway, Haakon Sandøy, 1977) – [Edvard Munch]
Rembrandt fecit 1669 (Netherlands, Jos Stelling, 1977) – [Rembrandt van Rijn]
Picassos äventyr (Adventures of Picasso) (Sweden, Tage Danielsson, 1978)

1980-89

Charlotte (Charlotte S.) (Germany/Netherlands/UK/Italy, Frans Weisz, 1980) – [Charlotte Salomon]
Egon Schiele – Exzesse (West Germany/France/Austria, Herbert Vesely, 1981)
Zille und ick (East Germany, Werner W. Wallroth, 1983) – [Heinrich Zille]
Every Picture Tells a Story (UK, James Scott, 1984) – [William Scott]
Caravaggio (UK, Derek Jarman, 1986) – [Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio]
Frida- Naturaleza Vida (Mexico, Paul Leduc, 1986) – [Frida Kahlo]
The Wolf at the Door (Oviri) (France/Denmark, Henning Carlsen, 1986) - [Paul Gauguin]
Hip Hip Hurra! (Sweden/Denmark/Norway, Kiell Grede, 1987) – [Skagen artists]
Theophilos (Greece, Lakis Papastathis, 1987) – [Theophilos Hatzimihail]
Camille Claudel (France, Bruno Nuytten, 1988)
Luces y sombras (Light and Shadows) (Spain, Jaime Camino, 1988) – [Diego Velazquez]
Les deux Fragonard (France, Philippe Le Guay, 1989) – [Honoré and Cyprien Fragonard]
Goitia: Un dios para sí mismo (Mexico, Diego López Rivera, 1989) - [Francisco Goitia]
My Left Foot (UK, Jim Sheridan, 1989) – [Christy Brown]

1990-99

Dali (Spain/Bulgaria, Antonio Ribas, 1990)
Vincent and Theo (Netherlands/UK/France/Italy/Germany, Robert Altman, 1990) – [Vincent Van Gogh]
Surmatants (aka Dance Macabre/ Dance of Death) (Estonia/Soviet Union, Tõnu Virve, 1991) – [Bernt Notke]
Van Gogh (France, Maurice Pialat, 1991)
The Bridge (UK, Sydney MacCartney, 1992) – [Philip Wilson Steer]
The Quince Tree Sun (El Sol del membrillo; aka The Dream of Light) (Spain, Victor Erice, 1992) – [Antonio López Garcia]
Mazepa (France, Bartabas, 1993) – [Théodore Gericault]
Postcards from America (UK/USA, Steve McLean, 1994) – [David Wojnarowicz]
Sirens (Australia/UK, John Duigan, 1994) – [Norman Lindsay]
Carrington (UK/France, Christopher Hampton, 1995)
I Shot Andy Warhol (UK/USA, Mary Harron, 1995)
Basquiat (USA, Julian Schnabel, 1996)
Surviving Picasso (USA, James Ivory, 1996)
Artemisia (France/Germany/Italy, Agnès Merlet, 1998) – [Artemisia Gentileschi]
Lautrec (Spain/France, Roger Planchon, 1998)
Love is the Devil (UK/France/Japan, John Maybury, 1998) – [Francis Bacon]
The Cradle Will Rock (USA, Tim Robbins, 1999) – [Diego Rivera]
Goya in Bordeaux (Goya en Burdeos) (Spain/Italy, Carlos Saura, 1999)
Rembrandt (France/Germany/Netherlands, Charles Matton, 1999)
Volavérunt (Spain/France, Bigas Lunas, 1999) – [Goya]

2000-2009

Pollock (USA, Ed Harris, 2000)

Bride of the Wind (UK/Germany/Austria, Bruce Beresford, 2001) – [Oskar Kokoschka, Gustav Klimt]

Frida (USA/Canada/Mexico, Julie Taymor, 2002) – [Frida Kahlo]

Aleijadinho: Paixão, Glória e Suplício (Aleijadinho: Passion, Glory and Torment) (Brazil, Geraldo Santos Pereira, 2003) – [Antonio Francisco Lisboa]

Girl with a Pearl Earring (UK/Luxembourg, Peter Webber, 2003) – [Johannes Vermeer]

Paradise Found (Australia/UK/France/Germany, Mario Andreacchio, 2003) – [Gauguin]

Modigliani (USA/France/Germany//Italy/Roumania/UK, Mick Davis, 2004)

My Nikifor (Poland, Krzysztof Krause, 2004) – [Nikifor Krynicki]

Pontormo un amore eretico (Pontormo a Heretical Love) (Italy, Giovanni Fago, 2004) – [Jacopo Carrucci, il Pontormo]

The Eyes of Van Gogh (USA, Alexander Barnett, 2005)

Caravaggio (Italy/France/Germany/Spain, Angelo Longoni, 2006)

Factory Girl (USA, George Hickenlooper, 2006) – [Andy Warhol]

Fur (Fur: An Imaginary Portrait of Diane Arbus) (USA, Steven Shainberg, 2006)

Goya's Ghosts (USA/Spain, Milos Forman, 2006)

Klimt (Austria, Raoul Ruiz, 2006) – [Gustav Klimt]

Miss Potter (UK/USA, Chris Noonan, 2006) – [Beatrix Potter]

El Greco (Greece/Spain/Hungary, Yannis Smaragdis, 2007)

Nightwatching (Netherlands/Canada/UK/France/Poland, Peter Greenaway, 2007) – [Rembrandt van Rijn]

Everlasting Moments (Maria Larssons eviga øgonblick) (Sweden/Denmark/Norway/Finland/Germany, Jan Troell, 2008) – [Maria Larssons]

Little Ashes (UK/Spain, Paul Morrison, 2008) – [Dalí]

Oscar (Spain, Lucas Fernández, 2008) – [Óscar Domínguez]

Séraphine (France/Belgium, Martin Provost, 2008) – [Séraphine de Senlis]

2010-

The Mill and the Cross (Młyn i Krzyż) (Sweden/Poland, Lech Majewski, 2011) – [Peter Bruegel the Elder]

Goltzius and the Pelican Company (Netherlands/ France/UK/Croatia, Peter Greenaway, 2012) – [Hendrick Goltzius]

Marie Krøyer (Ballade om Marie Krøyer) (Denmark/Sweden, Bille August, 2012)

Renoir (France, Gilles Bourdos, 2012) – [Auguste Renoir]

Camille Claudel 1915 (La Créatrice) (France, Bruno Dumont, 2013)

Summer in February (UK, Christopher Menaul, 2013) – [Newlyn artists]

Mr Turner (UK, Mike Leigh, 2014) – [William Turner]

B. Secondary works, fictional artists, *romans a clef*, and non-western films

- The Moon and Sixpence* (USA, Albert Lewin, 1942) – [Paul Gauguin]
Utamaro and His Five Women (Utamaro o Meguru Go-nin no Onna) (Japan, Kenji Mizoguchi, 1946)
The Horse's Mouth (UK, Ronald Neame, 1958)
The Rebel (UK, Robert Day, 1961)
Der Nackte Mann auf dem Sportplatz (The Naked Man in the Stadium) (GDR, Konrad Wolf, 1974)
The Far Shore (L'autre rive) (Canada, Joyce Wieland, 1976) – [Tom Thompson]
Besuch bei Van Gogh (Visiting Van Gogh) (GDR, Horst Seeman, 1985)
The Moderns (USA, Alan Rudolph, 1988)
New York Stories (USA 1989) Includes *Life Lessons* (Martin Scorsese) – [Chuck Connelly]
Dreams (Japan/USA, Akira Kurosawa, 1990) [Vincent Van Gogh]
Memories from the Garden of Etton (La Veillée) (France/Belgium, Samy Pavel, 1990) – [Vincent Van Gogh]
Vincent and Me (Vincent et Moi) (Canada/France, Michael Rubbo, 1990) – [Vincent Van Gogh]
La Belle Noiseuse (France, Jacques Rivette, 1991)
Yumeji (Japan, Seijun Suzuki, 1991) - [Yumeji Tokehisha]
Mina Tannenbaum (France, Martine Dugowson, 1993)
Pecker (USA, John Waters, 1998) – [Edward Furlong]
Studio 54 (USA, Mark Christopher, 1998) – [Andy Warhol]
Starry Night (UK/USA, Paul Davids, 1999) - [Vincent Van Gogh]
Full Moon Fables (USA, Edward B. Sherman, 2001) – [Vincent Van Gogh]
Moulin Rouge (USA/Australia, Baz Luhrmann, 2001) – [Toulouse-Lautrec]
Chihwaseon (Drunk on Women and Poetry) (South Korea, Im Kwon-taek, 2002) – [Jang Seung-up]
Rang Rasiya (Colours of Passion) (India, Ketan Mehta, 2008) – [Raja Ravi Varma]
Rembrandt's J'Accuse (Netherlands/Germany/Finland, Peter Greenaway, 2008)
Boogie Woogie (UK/USA/British Virgin Islands, Duncan Ward, 2009) – British art scene
Life? Or Theatre? (Netherlands/USA/Germany/France, Frans Weiss, 2011) – [Charlotte Salomon]
The Artist and the Model (El Artista y la Modelo) (Spain/France, Fernando Trueba, 2012)

Appendix B.Table 1. Number of artist biopics by decade

	Biopics (A)	Secondary (B)	A + B
1930s	3	1	4
1940s	5	2	7
1950s	5	1	6
1960s	12	1	13
1970s	12	2	14
1980s	20	3	23
1990s	20	9	29
2000s	20	5	25
2010s	7	2	9

Appendix D. Artists' biopics according to chronological subject, together with country of origin and date of production.

14th Century

Andrei Rublev 1360?-1430
Russia, 1966

15th Century

Bernt Notke 1435-1509 (and Michel Sittou 1469-1525)
Estonia, 1991
Leonardo da Vinci 1452-1519
Italy, 1948
Tilman Riemenschneider 1460?-1531
GDR, 1958
Michelangelo Buonarroti 1475-1564
USA/Italy, 1965
Jacopo Carrucci, il Pontormo 1494-1557
Italy, 2004

16th Century

Benvenuto Cellini 1500-1571
Italy, 1939
Italy, 1963
Peter Bruegel the Elder 1525-1569
Sweden, 2011
El Greco 1541-1614
Italy/France/Spain, 1966
Greece/Spain/Hungary, 2007
Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio 1571-1610
Italy, 1941
UK, 1986
Italy/France/Germany/Spain, 2006
Artemesia Gentileschi 1593-1652
France/Germany/Italy, 1998
Diego Velázquez 1599-1660
Spain, 1988

17th Century

Rembrandt van Rijn 1606-1669
UK, 1936
Germany, 1942
Netherlands, 1977
France/Germany/Netherlands, 1999
Netherlands/Canada/UK/France/Poland, 2007
Salvator Rosa 1615-1673
Italy, 1939

Jan Vermeer 1632-1675
 UK/Luxembourg, 2003
 Andreas Schluter 1660?-1714
 Germany, 1942

18th Century

Aleijadinho (Antonio Francisco Lisboa) 1730-1814
 Brazil, 2003
 Jean-Honoré Fragonard 1732-1806
 France, 1989
 Francisco de Goya 1746-1828
 USA/Italy, 1959
 Spain, 1971
 GDR, 1971
 Spain/Italy, 1999
 Spain/France, 1999
 USA/Spain, 2006
 Jean-Louis André Théodore Géricaut 1791-1824
 France, 1993

19th Century

Anselm Feuerbach 1829-1880
 Austria, 1947
 Auguste Renoir 1841-1919
 France 2012
 Raja Ravi Varma 1848-1906
 India, 2008
 Paul Gauguin 1848-1903
 France/Denmark, 1986
 Australia/UK/France/Germany, 2003
 Pedor Severin Krøyer (1851-1909) and Marie Krøyer (1867-1940)
 Sweden, 1987
 Denmark, 2012
 Tivadar Kosztká Csontváry 1853-1919
 Hungary, 1980
 Vincent van Gogh 1853-1890
 USA, 1956
 GDR/GFR, 1985
 Netherlands/UK/France/Italy/Germany, 1990
 France, 1991
 USA, 2005
 Heinrich Zille 1858-1929
 East Germany, 1983
 Philip Wilson Steer 1860-1942
 UK, 1992
 Gustav Klimt 1862-1918
 UK/Germany/Austria, 2001

Austria, 2006
Pirosmani 1862-1918
USSR, 1971
Camille Claudel 1864-1943
France, 1988
France 2013
Edvard Munch 1863-1944
Norway/Sweden, 1974
Poland, 1977
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec 1864-1901
UK, 1952
Spain/France, 1998
S raphine de Senlis 1864-1934
France/Belgium, 2008
Beatrix Potter 1866-1943
UK/USA, 2006
Theophilos Hatzimihail 1870-1934
Greece, 1987
A.J. Munnings 1878-1959
UK 2013
Norman Lindsay 1879-1969
Australia/UK, 1994
Pablo Picasso 1881-1973
USA, 1969
Sweden, 1978
USA, 1996
Francisco Goitia 1882-1960
Mexico, 1989
Jose Clemente Orozco 1883-1949
Mexico, 1974
Maria Larsson 1883-1959
Sweden, 2008
Amedeo Modigliani 1884-1920
France, 1958
USA/France/Germany/Italy/Roumania/UK, 2004
Aloise Corbaz 1886-1964
France, 1975
Diego Rivera 1886-1957
USA, 1999
USA/Canada/Mexico, 2002
Oskar Kokoschka 1886-1980
UK, 2001
Egon Schiele 1890-1918
West Germany, 1981
Henri Gaudier-Brzeska 1891-1915
UK, 1972

Dora Carrington 1893-1932
UK/France, 1995
Nikifor Krynicki 1895-1968
Poland, 2004

20th Century

Salvador Dali 1904-1989
Spain/Bulgaria, 1990
UK/Spain, 2008
Oscar Domínguez 1906-1957
Spain, 2008
Frida Kahlo 1907-1954
Mexico, 1986
USA/Canada/Mexico, 2002
Francis Bacon 1909-1992
UK/France/Japan, 1998
Jackson Pollock 1912-1956
USA, 2000
William Scott 1913-1989
UK, 1984
Charlotte Salomon 1917-1943
Germany, 1980
Diane Arbus 1923-1971
USA, 2006
Andy Warhol 1928-1987
UK/USA, 1995
USA, 1996
USA, 2006
Christy Brown 1932-1981
UK, 1989
Antonio Lopez Garcia 1936-
Spain, 1992
David Hockney 1937-
UK, 1974
David Wojnarowicz 1954-1992
UK, 1994
Jean-Michel Basquiat 1960-1988
USA, 1996

Appendix E. Artist biopics chronologically by country, according to main investor**United Kingdom**

Rembrandt (1936); Moulin Rouge (1952); Savage Messiah (1972); A Bigger Splash (1974); Every Picture Tells a Story (1984); Caravaggio (1986); My Left Foot (1989); The Bridge (1992); Postcards from America (1994); I Shot Andy Warhol (1995); Carrington (1995); Love is the Devil (1998); Bride of the Wind (2001); Girl with a Pearl Earring (2003); Miss Potter (2006); Little Ashes (2008); Boogie Woogie (2009); Summer in February (2013).

USA

The Affairs of Cellini (1934); Lust for Life (1959); The Naked Maja (1959); The Agony and the Ecstasy (1965); The Picasso Summer (1969); Basquiat (1996); Surviving Picasso (1996); The Cradle Will Rock (1999); Pollock (2000); Frida (2002); Modigliani (2004); The Eyes of Van Gogh (2005); Factory Girl (2006); Fur (2006); Goya's Ghosts (2006).

France

Montparnasse 19 (1958); Aloïse (1975); The Wolf at the Door (1986); Camille Claudel (1988); Les deux Fragonards (1989); Memories from the Garden of Etten (1990); Van Gogh (1991); Mazeppa (1993); Artemisia (1998); Rembrandt (1999); Séraphine (2008); Renoir (2012); Camille Claudel 1915 (2013).

Italy

Salvatore Rosa (1939); Sei Bambine e il Perseo (1939); Caravaggio (1941); L'Ultima Cena (1948); Il Magnifico Avventuriero (1963); El Greco (1966); Pontormo (2004); Caravaggio (2006).

Spain

Goya (1971); Luces y sombras (1988); Dalí (1990); The Quince Tree Sun (1992); Lautrec (1998); Goya in Bordeaux (1999); Volavérunt (1999).

Germany

Andreas Schlüter (1942); Rembrandt (1942); Tilman Riemenschneider (1958) (E); Goya (1971) (E); Charlotte (1980) (W); Egon Schiele – Exzesse (1981) (W); Zille und ick (1983) (E).

Netherlands

Rembrandt fecit 1669 (1977); Vincent and Theo (1990); Nightwatching (2007); Goltzius and the Pelican Company (2013).

Sweden

Adventures of Picasso (1978); Hip Hip Hurrah! (1987); Everlasting Moments (2008); The Mill and the Cross (2011).

Mexico

En busco de un muro (1976); Frida – naturaleza vida (1986); Goitia: un dios para si mismo (1989)

Russia

Andrei Rublev (1966); Pirosmanni (1971); Surmatants (1991)

Australia

Sirens (1994); Paradise Found (2003).

Austria

Das Unsterbliche Antlitz (1947); Klimt (2006).

Greece

Theophilos (1987); El Greco (2007).

Poland

Dagny (1977); My Nikifor (1999).

Brazil

Aleijadhino (2003).

Canada

The Far Shore (1976);

Denmark

Marie Krøyer (2012).

Hungary

Csontváry (1980)

Norway

Edvard Munch (1974).

Appendix F : German bio-pics of the Second World War.

- Der Herrscher* (Veit Harlan, 1937) [Fictional armaments manufacturer, Matthias Clausen]
Das Unstterblicher Herz (Veit Harlan, 1939) [Peter Henlein, inventor of the pocket watch]
Robert Koch: der Bekämpfer des Todes (Hans Steinhoff, 1939) [Proposed the germ theory of illness and fought against tuberculosis]
Bismarck (Wolfgang Liebeneiner, 1940)
Friedrich Schiller: Der Triumph eines Genies (Herbert Maisch, 1940)
Carl Peters (Herbert Selpin, 1941) [Founding of Deutsche Ostafrika]
Friedemann Bach (Traugott Müller/Gustaf Gründgens, 1941) [One of the elder Bach's children]
Ohm Krüger (Uncle Krüger) (Hans Steinhoff, 1941)
Wen die Götter Lieben (Loved by the Gods) (Karl Hartl, 1942) [Mozart]
Andreas Schlüter (aka Baumeister des Königs) (Herbert Maisch, 1942)
Diesel (Gerhard Lamprecht, 1942) [Rudolf Diesel, of the engine]
Geheimakte WBI (Herbert Selpin, 1942) [Wilhelm Bauer, submarine engineer 1834]
Rembrandt (Hans Steinhoff, 1942)
Paracelsus (G.W. Pabst, 1943) [Physician, Theophrastus Bombastus Von Hohenheim, 1493-1541]
Der unendliche Weg (Hans Schweikart, 1943) [Friedrich List, 1789-1846, Professor of Political Science, Tübingen and founder of the German Customs Union]
Komödianten (G.W. Pabst, 1944) [Karoline Neuber, founder in 1750's of the first German National Theatre]
Träumerie (Harold Braun, 1944) [Clara and Robert Schumann]

Appendix G: Artist biopics featuring female artists

Aloïse. France, Liliane de Kermadec, 1975. Aloïse Corbaz.

Charlotte (Charlotte S.). West Germany/Netherlands/UK/Italy, Frans Weisz, 1980. Charlotte Salomon.

Frida – Naturaleza Vida .Mexico, Paul Leduc, 1986. Frida Kahlo.

Camille Claudel. France, Bruno Nuytten, 1988. Camille Claudel.

Carrington. UK/France, Christopher Hampton, 1995. Dora Carrington.

Artemisia. France/Germany/Italy, Agnès Merlet, 1998. Artemisia Gentileschi.

Frida. USA/Canada/Mexico, Julie Taymor, 2002. Frida Kahlo.

Fur (Fur: An imaginary Portrait of Diane Arbus). USA, Steven Shainborg, 2006. Diane Arbus.

Miss Potter. UK/USA, Chris Noonan, 2006. Beatrix Potter.

Everlasting Moments (Maria Larssons eviga øgonblick).

Sweden/Denmark/Norway/Finland/Germany, Jan Troell, 2008. Maria Larssons.

Séraphine. France/Belgium, Martin Provost, 2008. Séraphine Louis (Séraphine de Senlis).

Marie Krøyer (Ballade om Marie Krøyer). Denmark/Sweden, Bille August, 2012.

Camille Claudel 1915. France, Bruno Dumont, 2013.

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The Affairs of Cellini (aka *Firebrand*) (USA, 1934). *Director* Gregory La Cava; *Production Company* Twentieth Century Pictures; *Producer* Darryl F. Zanuck; *Screenplay* Bess Meredyth from the play by Edwin Justus Mayer; *Editor* Barbara McLean; *Photography* Charles Rosher; *Costumes* Gwen Wakeling; *Art Director* Richard Day; *Music* Alfred Newman. B/W, 90 mins. English.

Leading Players: Constance Bennett (*Duchess of Florence*), Fredric March (*Benvenuto Cellini*), Fay Wray (*Angela*), Frank Morgan (*Alessandro, Duke of Florence*).

The Agony and the Ecstasy (USA/Italy, 1965). *Director/Producer* Carol Reed; *Screenplay* Philip Dunne, from the novel by Irving Stone; *Photography* Leon Shamroy; *Editor* Samuel E. Beetley; *Production Designer* John F. DeCuir *Music* Alex North, and for the Prologue, Jerry Goldsmith. Colour, 127Mins (Original uncut version with Prologue 139 mins). English. Aspect Ratio 2.20: 1. (Todd-AO)

Leading Players: Charlton Heston (*Michelangelo*), Rex Harrison (*Pope Julius 11*), Diane Cilento (*Contessina de Medici*), Harry Andrews (*Bramante*), Tomas Milian (*Raphael*), Alberto Lupo (*Duke of Urbino*), Adolfo Celi (*Giovanni de Medici*), Fausto Tozzi (*Foreman*), Venantino Venantini (*Paris de Grassis*), John Stacy (*Sangallo*).

DVD. Twentieth Century Fox F1-SGB 0100701009. Region 2.

Aleijadhino – Paixão, Glória e Suplício (Aleijadhino – Passion, Glory and Torment) (Brazil, 2003). *Director* Geraldo Santos Pereira; *Production Company* Vila Rich Produções Cinematográficas; *Producer* Paulo Leite Soares; *Screenplay* Geraldo Santos Pereira, Renato Santos Pereira; *Photography* Cláudio Portioli; *Editor* Vera Freire; *Sound* Alaérsio Coelho; *Production Design* Marco Antonio Rocha; *Art Direction* Paulo Henrique Pessoa; *Costume* Marney Heitmann, Raul Belém Machado; *Music* Edino Kruger. Colour, 100mins. Portuguese.

Leading Players: Mauricio Gonçalves (*Aleijadhino*), Maria Ceiça (*Helena*), Ruth de Souza (*Joana Lopes*), Edwin Luisi (*Manoel Francisco Lisboa*), Antonio Naddeo (*Rodrigo Bretas*), Carlos Vereza (*Cláudio Manoel da Costa*).

DVD. Region 1. 2011. Facets Video, ArtMattan Productions. Part of set **Race and History in Brazil**, 2 discs, also comprising the documentary **Denying Brazil** (A Negação do Brasil) (Brazil, 2000)

Aloise (France, 1975). *Director* Liliane de Kermadec; *Production Company* Unité Trois; *Producer* Guy Cavagnac, Alain Dahan, Liliane de Kermadec, Paul Vecchiali; *Screenplay* Liliane de Kermadec, André Téchiné; *Photography* Jean Penzer, Gilbert Duhalde; *Editor* Claude Merlin; *Designer* Michel Farge, Rémi Pellaton; *Costumes* Christian Gasc. Eastmancolor, 115 mins. French. Aspect Ratio 1.50: 1.

Leading Players: Isabelle Huppert (*Aloise as a child*), Delphine Seyrig (*Aloise as an adult*), Marc Eyraud (*Aloise's father*), Valérie Schoeller (*Else as a child*), Monique Lejeune (*Else as an adult*), Julien Guimar (*Theatre Director*), Roger Blin (*Singing Teacher*).

DVD. 2008. LCJ Editions, 1002315 EDV820. Region 2. Bonus: Filmographies; Photo Gallery; Quiz. (Les films du collectionneur).

Andreas Schlüter (Germany, 1942). *Director* Herbert Maisch; *Production Company* Terra-Film, Deutsche Filmvertriebs-Gesellschaft; *Screenplay* Herbert Maisch and Helmut Brandis, from the book, *Der munzturm*, by Alfred von Czibulka; *Photography* Ewald Daub; *Sound* Erich Schmidt; *Music* Wolfgang Zeller. B/W, 111 mins, 10098 feet. German. Aspect Ratio: 4:3.

Leading Players: Heinrich George (*Andreas Schlüter*), Olga Tschechowa (*Gräfin Vera Ollewska*), Dorothea Wieck (*Kurfürstin*), Mila Kopp (*Elisabeth Schlüter*), Karl John (*Martin Böhme*), Theodor Loos (*Kurfürst Friedrich III*), Marianne Simson (*Leonore*).

DVD. Black Hill/ Warner (9991795). Region 2. Special features: Biographies and Filmographies; Portrait of Andreas Schlüter. 106 mins.

Andrei Rublev (USSR, 1966, released in USSR in 1971). *Director* Andrei Tarkovsky; *Producer* Tamara Oyorodnikova; *Production Company* Mosfilm Studio; *Screenplay* Andrei Tarkovsky, Andrei Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky; *Photography* Vadim Yusov; *Editor* Ludmila Feganova; *Sound* E. Zelentsova; *Art Director* Evgeni Cherniaev; *Costumes* L. Novy, M. Abar-Baranovsky; *Music* Vyacheslav Ovchinnikov. B/W and colour (Sovcolor), 185 mins. Russian. Aspect Ratio:2.35:1 (Sovscope).

Leading Players: Anatoly Solonitsin (*Andrei Rublev*), Ivan Lapikov (*Kirill*), Nikolai Grinko (*Daniil*), Nikopai Sergeyev (*Theophanes the Greek*), Irma Rausch (*Holy Fool*), Nikolai Burlyaev (*Boriska*), Yuri Nazarov (*Grand Prince/Lesser Prince*), Rolan Bykov (*Jester*), N. Glazkov (*Efim*).

DVD. Artificial Eye (ART011). Region 2. 2 discs. Special features: Filmographies; Stills gallery; Interview with Tarkovsky's sister Marina Tarkovskaya; Interview with actor Yuri Nazarov; Theophanes the Greek, Andrei Rublev and Behind the Scenes featurettes; Tarkovsky trailers.

Artemisia (France/Germany/Italy, 1997). *Director* Agnès Merlet; *Producer* Patrice Haddad; *Production Company* 3 Emme Cinematografica, Première Heure, France 3 Cinéma, Schlemmer Film, Dania Film, Mediaset, Fonds Eurimages du Conseil de l'Europe, Presidenzia del Consiglio del Ministri-Dipartimento dello Spettacolo *Screenplay* Agnès Merlet, Christine Miller; *Photography* Benoît Delhomme; *Editor* Guy Lecorne, Daniele Sordoni; *Sound* François Waedisch; *Set Decoration* Erita Frigato; *Costume* Dominique Borg; *Music* Krishna Levy. Colour, 91 mins. French. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.

Leading Players: Valentina Cervi (*Artemisia Gentileschi*), Michel Serrault (*Orazio Gentileschi*), Miki Manojlovic (*Agostino Tassi*), Luca Zingaretti (*Cosimo*), Brigitte Catillon (*Tuzia*), Frédéric Pierrot (*Roberto*), Emmanuelle Devos (*Costanza*).

DVD. Bluebell Films (BL8004). Region 2.

The Artist and the Model (El artista y la modelo). (Spain/France, 2012). *Director and Producer* Fernando Trueba; *Production Company* Audio Visual, Bonne Pioche, Fernando Trueba Producciones Cinematográficas, ICO, Televisión Española (TVE); *Screenplay* Fernando Trueba, Jean-Claude Carrière; *Photography* Daniel Vilar; *Editor* Marta Velasco; *Sound* Pierre Gamet; *Production Design* Pilar Revuelta; *Costume* Lala Huete. Black and white, 105 mins. French/Catalan/Spanish. Aspect ratio 2.35: 1.

Leading Players: Jean Rochefort (*Marc Cros*), Aida Foch (*Mercè*), Claudia Cardinale (*Léa Cros*), Chus Lampreave (*María*), Götz Otto (*Werner*).

DVD. Region 2. Axiom Films AXM674. Special features: Interview with director Fernando Trueba; Stills galleries.

Un Avventura di Salvator Rosa (Italy, 1940). *Director* Alessandro Blasetti; *Producer* Leo Menardi, Andrea Di Robilan, Augusto Turati; *Production Company* Stella Movie; *Screenplay* Corado Pavolini, Alessandro Blasetti, Renato Castellani; *Photography* Vaclav Vich; *Editor* Mario Serandrei, Alessandro Blasetti; *Sound* Giovanni Paris; *Designer* Virgilio Marchi; *Costumes* Gino Sensani; *Music* Alessandro Cicognini. B/W, 90 mins. Italian. Aspect Ratio 1.37: 1.

Leading Players: Gino Cervi (*Salvator Rosa*), Luisa Ferida (*Lucrezia*), Rina Morelli (*Isabella di Torniano*), Osvaldo Valenti (*Conte Lamberto D'Arco*), Ugo Cèseri (*Giuseppe*), Umberto Sacripante (*Il primo contadino*), Paolo Stoppa (*Il secondo contadino*), Enzo Biliotti (*Il Viceré di Napoli*).

Basquiat (USA, 1996). *Director* Julian Schnabel; *Producer* Jon Kilic, Randy Ostrow, Sigorjon Sighvatsson; *Production Company* Eleventh Street Production, Jon Kilic, Miramax Films; *Screenplay* Lech Majewski, John Bowe, Julian Schnabel, Michael Holman; *Photography* Ron Fortunato; *Editor* Michael Berenbaum; *Sound* Ira Spiegel; *Production Design* Dan Leigh; *Art Direction* C.J. Simpson; *Costume* John A. Dunn; *Music* John Cale, Julian Schnabel. Colour, 108 mins. English/Spanish. Aspect Ratio 1.85:1.

Leading Players: Jeffrey Wright (*Jean Michel Basquiat*), Michael Wincott (*Rene Ricard*), Benicio Del Toro (*Benny Dalman*), Claire Forlani (*Gina Cardinale*), David Bowie (*Andy Warhol*), Dennis Hopper (*Bruno Bischofberger*), Gary Oldman (*Albert Miro*), Christopher Walken (*The Interviewer*), Willem Dafoe (*The Electrician*), Parker Posey (*Mary Boone*), Courtney Love (*Big Pink*), Tatum O'Neal (*Cynthia Kruger*).

DVD. Pathé P8918DVD.Region 2. Special Features: Original theatrical trailer.

La Belle Noiseuse (France/Switzerland, 1991). *Director* Jacques Rivette ; *Producer* Martine Marignac ; *Production Company* Pierre Grise Productions, George Reinhart Productions, FR3 Films Production ; *Screenplay* Pascal Bonitzer, Christine Laurent, Jacques Rivette, based on Balzac's novella 'Le chef-d'œuvre inconnu' ; *Photography* William Lubtchansky ; *Editor* Nicole Lubtchansky ; *Sound* Florian Eidenberg ; *Production Design* Emmanuel de Chauvigny ; *Costume* Laurence Struz. Eastmancolor, 238 mins. French/English. Aspect Ratio 1.37:1.

Leading Players: Michel Piccoli (*Edouard Frenhofer*), Jane Birkin (*Liz*), Emmanuelle Béart (*Marianne*), Marianne Denicourt (*Julienne*), David Bursztein (*Nicolas*), Gilles Arbona (*Porbus*), Marie Belluc (*Magali*), Marie-Claude Roger (*Françoise*),

DVD. New Yorker Video DVD 59904. Region 1. Special Features: Theatrical trailer; Interview with Jacques Rivette; Interview with co-writers Pascal Bonitzer and Christine Laurent; Filmographies.

Besuch bei Van Gogh (Visiting Van Gogh). (GDR, 1985). *Director* Horst Seeman; *Production Company* DEFA Film; *Screenplay* Sever Ganovsky (as Sewer), Heinz Kahlau, Horst Seeman; *Photography* Claus Neumann; *Editor* Babel Bauersfeld; *Design* Georg Wratsch; *Costume* Inge Kistner; *Sound* Konrad Walle. Colour, 105 mins (USA 101 mins), 2865m. German.

Leading Players: Grazyna Szapalowska (*Marie Grafenstein*), Christian Grashof (*Vincent Van Gogh*), Rolf Hoppe (*Amadeus Berek*), Dagmar Patrasová (*Kati*), Hanns-Jörn Weber

(*Chefkoordinator*), Barbara Dittus (*Blonde*), Käthe Reichel (*Johanna Van Gogh*), Hartmut Puls (*Theo Van Gogh*), Martin Tretttau (*Dr Gachet*).

A Bigger Splash (UK, 1974). *Director/Producer* Jack Hazan ; *Distributor* Buzzy Enterprises; *Production Company* Buzzy Enterprises, Circle Associates; *Screenplay* Jack Hazan, David Mingay; *Photography* Jack Hazan; *Editor* David Mingay; *Sound* Greg Bailey, Colin Richards, Doug Turner; *Music* Patrick Gowers. Eastmancolour, 105 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 1.66: 1.

Leading Players (as themselves): David Hockney, Peter Schlesinger, Celia Birtwell, Mo McDermott, Henry Geldzahler, Ossie Clark, Patrick Procktor, Kasmin, Betty Freeman. DVD1. First Run Features (FRF912099D). Region 1. Bonus materials: Interview with Jack Hazan [Text]; Photo gallery; Film notes.

DVD2. Salvation Group (HOCK001: VDF01198). Region 0. Extras: Stills Gallery; *Grant North* (Hazan, 1969); Interview with Jack Hazan by Adam Roberts (2006, 30 mins.).

BLU-RAY. BFI (BFIB1137). 2012. Region 0. Special Features: Illustrated booklet including essays by John Wyver, Michael Brooke and William Fowler; Interview with Jack Hazan by Adam Roberts (2006, 28 mins); Original theatrical trailer; Love's Presentation (James Scott, 1966, 25 mins); Portrait of David Hockney (David Pearce, 1972, 13 mins).

Boogie Woogie (UK/USA/British Virgin Islands, 2009) *Director* Duncan Ward; *Production Company* The Works International; *Producer* Danny Moynihan, Kami Naghdi, Christopher Simon, Cat Villiers; *Distributor* Vertigo Films; *Screenplay* Danny Moynihan, based on his novel; *Photography* John Mathieson; *Editor* Kent Pan; *Art Director* Nick Dent; *Costumes* Claire Anderson; *Sound* Kenny Lee; *Music* Janusz Podrazik; *Art Curator* Damien Hirst. Color By DeLuxe, 94 mins., 8477ft. English. Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1.

Leading Players: Gillian Anderson (*Jean Maclestone*), Alan Cumming (*Dewey Dalamanatousis*), Heather Graham (*Beth Freemantle*), Danny Huston (*Art Spindle*), Jack Huston (*Jo Richards*), Christopher Lee (*Mr Alfred Rhinegold*), Joanna Lumley (*Mrs Alfred Rhinegold*), Charlotte Rampling (*Emile*), Amanda Seyfried (*Paige Oppenheimer*), Stellan Skarsgard (*Bob Maclestone*), Jaime Winstone (*Elaine*), Alfie Allen (*Photographer*).

DVD1. IFC Films, IFC9754. Region 1. 94Mins. Special features: Trailer, Tv Spot.

DVD2. Vertigo Films, VER51376. Region 2. 91mins.

Bride of the Wind (UK/Germany/Austria, 2001). *Director* Bruce Beresford; *Production Company* Alma Uk Limited, Apollo Media Distribution, Firelight Films, Kolar-Levy Productions, Terra Film Production, Total Film Group; *Producer* Margit Bimler, Gerald Green, Frank Hübner; *Screenplay* Marilyn Levy; *Photography* Peter James; *Editor* Timothy Wellburn; *Production Design* Herbert Pinter; *Art Direction* Christian Marin; *Costume* Shuna Harwood; *Sound* Jason Adams, Dennis McTaggart; *Music* Stephen Endelman. Colour. 99 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.

Leading Players: Sarah Wynter (*Alma Mahler*), Jonathan Pryce (*Gustav Mahler*), Vincent Perez (*Oskar Kokoschka*), Simon Verhoeven (*Walter Gropius*), August Schmölder (*Gustav Klimt*), Gregor Seberg (*Franz Werfel*), Renée Fleming (*Frances Alda*).

DVD. Region 2. Manga Films International D2405.

The Bridge (UK, 1992). *Director* Syd Macartney; *Production Company* Moon Light (Bridge), British Screen, Film Four International; *Producer* Lyn Goleby; *Screenplay* Adrian Hodges,

based on the book by Maggie Hemingway; *Photography* David Tattersall; *Editor* Michael Ellis; *Sound* Peter Maxwell; *Designer* Terry Pritchard; *Costumes* Jenny Beaven; *Music* Richard G. Mitchell. Colour, 98 mins. English.

Leading Players: Saskia Reeves (*Isobel Heatherington*), David O'Hara (*Philip Wilson Steer*), Joss Ackland (*Smithson*), Rosemary Harris (*Aunt Jude*), Anthony Higgins (*Reginald Heatherington*), Geraldine James (*Mrs Todd*), Tabitha Allen (*Emma Heatherington*). VHS VIDEOTAPE. Columbia Tristar CVT17279.

Camille Claudel (France, 1988). *Director* Bruno Nuytten; *Producer* Bernard Artiques; *Production Company* Films Christian Fechner/ Lilith Films/ Gaumont/ A2TV France/DD Productions; *Screenplay* Bruno Nuytten, Marilyn Goldin; *Photography* Pierre L'Homme; *Editor* Joëlle Hache, Jeanne Kef; *Design* Bernard Vézat; *Costume* Dominique Borg; *Sound* Françoise Lèfevre; *Music* Gabriel Yared. Colour, 174 mins. French.

Leading Players: Isabelle Adjani (*Camille Claudel*), Gérard Depardieu (*Auguste Renoir*), Laurent Grévill (*Paul Claudel*), Alain Cuny (*Louis-Prosper Claudel*), Philippe Clévenot (*Eugène Blot*), Madeleine Robinson (*Louise-Athenaise Claudel*), Katrine Boorman (*Jessie Lipscomb*), Daniëlle Lebrun (*Rose Beuret*), Maxime Leroux (*Claude Debussy*). DVD. Studio Canal/Optimum World OPTD0971. Region 2.

Camille Claudel 1915 (La Créatrice) (France, 2013). *Director/ Screenplay* Bruno Dumont; *Producer* Rachid Bouchareb, Jean Bréhat, Muriel Merlin; *Production Company* 3B Productions, C.R.R.A.V. Nord Pas de Calais, Canal+, Region PACA, arte France Cinéma; *Photography* Guillaume Deffontaines; *Editor* Basile Belkhiri; *Sound* Philippe Lecoeur; *Designer* Riton Dupire-Clément; *Costumes* Alexandra Charles, Brigitte Massey-sersoir. Colour, 95 mins. French. Aspect Ratio 2.35 : 1.

Leading Players: Juliette Binoche (*Camille Claudel*), Jean-Luc Vincent (*Paul Claudel*), Emmanuel Kauffman (*Le prêtre*), Marion Keller (*Mlle. Blanc*), Robert Leroy (*Le médecin*), Armelle Leroy-Rolland (*La jeune soeur novice*).

Caravaggio (UK, 1986). *Director* Derek Jarman; *Distributor* BFI; *Production Company* BFI with Channel 4 and Nicholas Ward-Jackson; *Producers* Colin McCabe, Sarah Radclyffe; *Screenplay* Derek Jarman; *Photography* Gabriel Beristain *Paintings and Production Design* Christopher Hobbs; *Costumes* Sandy Powell; *Sound* Billy McCarthy; *Music* Simon Fisher Turner. Colour, 8353ft., 89 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.

Leading Players: Nigel Terry (*Michelangelo Caravaggio*), Sean Bean (*Ranuccio Thomasoni*), Tilda Swinton (*Lena*), Nigel Davenport (*Giustiniani*), Robbie Coltrane (*Cardinal Scipione Borghese*), Michael Gough (*Cardinal Del Monte*), Spencer Leigh (*Jerusalem*), Dawn Archibald (*Pipo*), Jack Birkett (*Pope*).

DVD. BFI, (BFIVD 726). Region 2. Bonus materials: Specially commissioned interviews with Tilda Swinton, Nigel Terry and Christopher Hobbs; Feature commentary by Gabriel Beristain; Filmed and audio interviews with Derek Jarman; Gallery of storyboards, production sketches, Derek Jarman's notebooks; Illustrated booklet including introductory essay by Colin MacCabe and interview with Sandy Powell.

Caravaggio (Italy/France/Germany/Spain, 2007). *Director* Angelo Longoni; *Producer* Ida Di Benedetto, Stefania Ifano; *Production Company* Titania Produzion, RAI Fiction, GMT Production, EOS Entertainment, Institut del Cinema Català; *Screenplay* James Carrington,

Andrea Purgatori; *Photography* Vittorio Storaro; *Editor* Mauro Bonanni; *Sound* Andrea Moser; *Art Director* Jasna Dragovich; *Production Design* Giantito Burchiellaro; *Costumes* Francesca Lia Morandini; *Music* Luis Enriquez Bacalov. Colour, 130 mins. Italian. Aspect Ratio 2.00: 1.

Leading Players: Alessio Boni (*Caravaggio*), Jordi Mollà (*Cardinal Del Monte*), Elena Sofia Ricci (*Constanza Colonna*), Sarah Felberbaum (*Lena*), Maurizio Donadoni (*Ranuccio Tomassoni*).

DVD.01 Distribution 02563. Region 2. Special features : Dietro Le Quinte.

Caravaggio, il pittore maledetto (Caravaggio, the Painter of Doom) (Italy, 1941). *Director* Goffredo Alessandrini; *Producer* Francesco Curato; *Production Company* Elica Film; *Distributor* Minerva Film; *Screenplay* Goffredo Alessandrini, Riccardo Freda, Gherardo Gheradi, Akos Tonay; *Editor* Giancarlo Cappelli; *Photography* Aldo Tonti, Jan Stallich; *Sound* Vittorio Verga, Bruno Valeri; *Costumes* Veniero Colasanti; *Music* Riccardo Zandonai. B/W, 105 mins. Italian.

Leading Players: Amedeo Nazzari (*Michelangelo Merisi, il "Caravaggio"*), Clara Calami (*Madonna Giaconella*), Lamberto Picasso (*Il cavalier d'Arpino*), Nino Crisman (*Alef di Wignacourt*), Lauro Gazzolo (*Zio Nello*), Beatrice Mancini (*Lena*), Olinto Cristina (*Il cardinale Dal Monte*), Maria Dominiani (*Alessandra*), Achilles Majeroni (*Il cardinale Scipione Borghese*), Renato Malavasi (*Mauro*), Salvatore Furnari (*Il nano*).

Carrington (UK, 1995). *Director/Screenplay* Christopher Hampton; *Producer* Ronald Shedlo, John McGrath; *Production Company* Polygram, Freeway/Shedlo Production, Dora Productions Ltd, Cinea & Orsans/Studio Canal; *Photography* Denis Lenoir; *Editor* George Akers; *Art Director* Frank Walsh; *Costume* Penny Rose; *Music* Michael Nyman. Technicolor, 122 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.

Leading Players: Emma Thompson (*Carrington*), Jonathan Pryce (*Lytton Strachey*), Steven Waddington (*Ralph Partridge*), Samuel West (*Gerald Brenan*), Rufus Sewell (*Mark Gertler*), Penelope Wilton (*Lady Ottoline Morrell*), Janet McTeer (*Vanessa Bell*), Peter Blythe (*Phillip Morrell*), Jeremy Northam (*Beacus Penrose*).

DVD. MGM 22125DVD MZ1. Region 2. Includes original theatrical trailer.

Charlotte (Charlotte S.) (Netherlands/West Germany/UK/Italy, 1981). *Director* Frans Weisz; *Production Company* BBC, CCC (Central Cinema Company), Radiotelevisione Italiana, Concorde Film Produkte, Sender Freies Berlin (SFB), Cineteam Features, Filmalpha Rome; *Producer* Peter Hahne; *Screenplay* Judith Herzberg, Frans Weisz, Egisto Macchi; *Photography* Jerzy Lipman, Theo Van de Sande; *Editor* Clarissa Ambach; *Art Direction* Jan Schlubach; *Costume* Marianne Emrath, Marianne Van Wijnkoop; *Music* Egisto Macchi. Fujicolor, 97 mins. (Germany), 96 mins. (Netherlands).

Dutch/German/English. Aspect Ratio 1.66: 1.

Leading Players: Birgit Doll (*Charlotte Salomon*), Max Croiset (*Albert*), Derek Jacobi (*August Daberlohn*), Brigitte Horney (*Grandmother*), Peter Faber (*Frits Blech*), Elisabeth Trissenaar (*Paulinka Salomon*), Peter Capell (*Grandfather*).

DVD.Region 2. ABC Distribution WE152. Part of set **Leven? Of Theater?**, 2 discs also comprising the documentary **Leven? of Theater?** (Life or theatre?) (Netherlands, 2012).

Chihwaseon (Drunk on Women and Poetry) (South Korea, 2002). *Director* Im Kwon-taek; *Producer* Tae-won-Lee; *Production Company* Taehung Pictures; *Screenplay* Kim Young-oak, Im Kwon-taek, Byung-sam-Min; *Photography* Il-sung Jung; *Editor* Sun-duk Park; *Sound* Choong-Hwan Lee; *Art Director* Byung-doo Joo; *Costume* Ki-chul Kim, Hye-ran Lee; *Music* Young-dung Kim.. Colour, 116 mins. Korean. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.
Leading Players: Choi Min-sik (*Jang Seung-up, Oh-won*), You Ho-jeong (*Mae-hyang*), Ahn Sung-kee (*Kim Byung-moon*), Kim Yeo-jin (*Jin-hong*), Son Ye-jin (*Sowoon*).
 DVD. Pathé P-SGB P906401000.Region 2.

Colours of Passion (Rang Rasiya) (India, 2008). *Director* Ketan Mehta; *Production Company* Infinity, Maya Movies; *Producer* Rupali Mehta, Guneet Monga; *Screenplay* Ketan Mehta, Sanjeen Dutta; *Photography* Christo Bakalov; *Editor* Yves Beloniak, Pratik Chitalia; *Costume* Sangita Kathiwada; *Music* Sandesh Shandilya. Colour. Hindi. Aspect Ratio 2.35: 1.
Leading Players: Randeep Houda (*Raja Ravi Verma*), Nandana Sen (*Sugandha*), Jim Boeven (*Fritz Schleizer*), Tom Alter (*Justice Richards*), Guarav Dwivedi (*Raja Varma*), Paresh Kawal (*Govardhandas*), Triptha Parashar (*Princess*).

Cradle Will Rock (USA, 1999). *Director/Screenplay* Tim Robbins; *Production Company* Cradle Productions Inc., Havoc, Touchstone Pictures; *Producer* Lydia Dean Pilcher, Jon Kilik, Tim Robbins; *Photography* Jean-Yves Escoffier; *Editor* Geraldine Peroni; *Production Design* Richard Hoover; *Costume* Ruth Myers; *Sound* Tod A. Maitland; *Music* David Robbins. Colour, 132 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 2.35: 1
Leading Players: Hank Azania (*Marc Blitzstein*), Rubén Blades (*Diego Rivera*). Joan Cusak (*Hazel Huffman*), John Cusak (*Nelson Rockefeller*), Cary Elwes (*John Housman*), Angus Macfadyen (*Orson Welles*), Bill Murray (*Tommy Crickshaw*), Vanessa Redgrave (*Countess Constance LaGrange*), Susan Sarandon (*Margherita Sarfatti*), John Turturro (*Aldo Silvano*), Emily Watson (*Olive Stanton*), Bob Balaban (*Harry Hopkins*), Jack Black (*Sid*), Paul Giamatti (*Carlo*).
 DVD. Touchstone Home Video 18288. Region 1. Special features: Production featurette; Theatrical trailer.

Crows see **Dreams**

Csontvary (Hungary, 1980). *Director* Zoltán Huszár; *Production Company* Hunnia Filmstúdió; *Screenplay* István Császár, Péter Dobai, Tibor Gyurkovics, Zoltán Huszár, József Tornai; *Photography* Péter Jankura; *Editor* Éva Kármentő; *Designer* Tamás Vayer; *Costumes* Erzsébet Mialkovszky; *Sound* István Sipos; *Music* Miklós Kocsár. 112 mins, B/W & Eastmancolor. Hungarian, German, Italian, Arabic. Aspect Ratio 1.66: 1.
Leading Players: Itzhak Finzi (*Csontváry/ Z the actor*), István Holl (*The Wacky*), Andrea Drahota (*Anna*), Margit Dajka (*Mum*), Ágnes Bánfalvy (*Lilla*), Samu Balázs (*Emperor Franz Joseph*).

Dagny (Dagny – taiteilijaelämä) (Poland/Norway, 1977) *Director* Haakon Sandøy; *Production Company* Film Polski, Norsk Film, Zespół Filmowy Pryszmay; *Screenplay* Aleksander Scibor-Rylski; *Photography* Zygmunt Samosiuk; *Editor* Zofia Dwornik; *Sound*

Leszek Wronko; *Art Director* Teresa Barska, Hans Poppe; *Costume* Barbara Ptak; *Music* Arne Nordheim. Eastmancolor, 88 mins. Norwegian/Polish/German.

Leading Players: Lise Fjeldstad (*Dagny Juel-Przybyszewska*), Daniel Olbrychski (*Stanislaw Prybyszowski*), Per Oscarsson (*August Strindberg*), Nils Ole Oftebro (*Edvard Munch*), Maciej Englert (*Stanislaw Emeryk*), Olgierd Lukaszewicz (*Wladyslaw Emeryk*), Elzbieta Karkoszka (*Jadwiga Kasprowiczowa*), Jerzy Binczycki (*Jan Kasprowicz*).

Dalí (Spain/Bulgaria/Italy, 1991). *Director* Antoni Ribas; *Producer* Jaume Behar; *Production Company* Montornès Films/ DB Media; *Screenplay* Enric Gomà, Temistocles López; *Editor* Emili Ortiz; *Photography* Macari Golferichs; *Music* Antonio Sechi. Eastmancolor, 108 mins. Spanish. Aspect Ratio 1.85:1.

Leading Players: Lorenzo Quinn (*Salvador Dalí*), Sarah Douglas (*Gala*), Michael Catlin (*Tom Malouny*), Katherine Wallach (*Kares Krosby*), Francisco Guijar (*Paul*), Dimiter Guerasimof (*Bunuel*).

DVD.Manga Films D0716. Region 2. Special features: Filmographies; Photo gallery.

Les deux Fragonard (France, 1989). *Director* Philippe Le Guay; *Producer* Christian Charret, Cyril de Rouvre, André Lazare; *Production Company* Capital Cinéma, Compagnie Française Cinématographique (CFC), France 3; *Screenplay* Philippe Le Guay, Jérôme Tonnerre; *Photography* Bernard Zitzermann; *Sound* Nadine Tarbouriech; *Editor* Denise de Casabianca; *Design* Simone Amouyal; *Music* Jorge Arriagada. Eastmancolor, 112 mins. French.

Leading Players: Joaquim de Almeida (*Honoré Fragonard*), Robin Renucci (*Cyprien Fragonard*), Philippine Leroy-Beaulieu (*Marianne*), Sami Frey (*Salmon d'Anglas*), Jean-Louis Richard (*Saint-Jullien*), Philippe Clévenot (*Père Rudolphe*), Judith Magro (*Isabelle Nanty*).

Dreams (Yume/ Akira Kurosawa's Dreams) (Japan/USA, 1990). *Director/Screenplay* Akira Kurosawa; *Producer* Hisao Kurosawa, Mike Y. Inoue; *Production Company* Akira Kurosawa Productions; *Distribution* Warner Bros; *Photography* Takao Saito, Masahara Ueda; *Editor* Tome Minami; *Art Director* Yoshiro Murake, Akira Sakuragi; *Costumes* Emi Wada; *Music* Shinichiro Ikebe. Eastmancolor, 120 mins. Japanese/ French/English. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1. *Leading Players:* Akira Terao ("I"), Martin Scorsese (*Vincent van Gogh*), Mieko Harada (*The Snow Fairy*), Yoshitaka Zushi (*Private Noguchi*), Hisashi Igawa (*Nuclear Plant Worker*), Chosuke Ikariya (*The Crying Demon*), Chishu Ryu (*Old Man*), Masayuki Yui (*Member of Climbing Team*).

The film comprises eight segments: Sunshine Through the Rain; The Peach Orchard; The Blizzard; The Tunnel; Crows; Mount Fuji in Red; The Weeping Demon; Village of the Watermills. **Crows** segment featuring Van Gogh available at

www.guardian.co.uk/film/filmblog/2010/mar/23/akira-kurosawa-100-google-doodle-anniversary Accessed 03/02/2011.

Edvard Munch (Norway/Sweden, 1974). *Director/Screenplay/Editor* Peter Watkins; *Production Company* Norsk Rikskringkasting, Sveriges Radio; *Photography* Odd-Geir Saether; *Design* Grethe Hejer; *Costumes* Ada Skolmen; *Sound* Bjorn Harald Hansen, Kenneth-Storm Hansen. Colour, 221 mins. Norwegian. Aspect Ratio 1.33:1.

Leading Players: Geir Westby (*Edvard Munch*), Gro Fraas (*Mrs Heiberg*), Eli Ryg (*Oda Lasson*), Knut Kristiansen (*Christian Krohg*), Nils-Eger Pettersen (*Fritz Thaulow*), Morten Eid (*Sigbjørn Obstfelder*), Kåre Stormark (*Hans Jaeger*), Alf Kåre Strindberg (*August Strindberg*), Iselin von Hanno Bast (*Dagny Juell*), Johan Halsborg (*Dr Christian Munch 1884*), Gunnar Skjetne (*Peter Andreas Munch 1884*), Vigdis Nilssen (*Housemaid 1884*), Lotte Teig (*Aunt Karen Bjølstad 1884*), Berit Rytter Hasle (*Laura Munch 1884*), Gro Jarto (*Laura Catherine Munch 1884*), Rachel Pederssen (*Inger Munch 1884*).
DVD. Eureka -Masters of Cinema No. 51 (EKA40225).Region 2. Restored Version. Special features: 80 page book.

Egon Schiele –Exzesse (Egon Schiele: Excess and Punishment) (West Germany/France/Austria, 1981). *Director* Herbert Vesely; *Producer* Dieter Geissler; *Production Company* Cinéproduction, Dieter Geissler Filmproduktion, Gamma Film, Profinanz Filmproduktion, V-Film Herbert Vesely; *Screenplay* Leo Tichat, Herbert Vesely; *Photography* Rudolf Blakacek; *Editor* Dagmar Hirtz; *Sound* Hans-Dieter Schwarz; *Art Direction* Alfred Deutsch; *Costume* Maleen Pacha; *Music* Brian Eno. Colour, 95 mins, 2528 metres. German. Aspect Ratio 1.66: 1.
Leading Players: Mathieu Carrière (*Egon Schiele*), Jane Birkin (*Wally*), Christine Kaufmann (*Edith Harms*), Kristina Van Eyck (*Adele Harms*), Helmut Dohle (*Gustav Klimt*).
DVD. 2009. VLJ Communications DC0575620. Region 2. (Cineplus).

En Busca de un Muro (In Search of a Wall) (Mexico, 1974). *Director/Screenplay* Julio Bracho; *Production Company* Corporación Nacional Cinematográfica (Conacine), Estudios Churubisco, Azteca S.A.; *Photography* Alex Phillips Jr.; *Editor* Gloria Schoemann; *Design* Jorge Fernández; *Costume* Julio Chávez; *Music* Blas Galindo. Colour. 120 mins. Spanish.
Leading Players: Ignacio López Tarso (*José Clemente Orozco*), Irán Eory (*Alma Reed*), Carlos López Moctezuma (*Frank Lloyd Wright*), Andrea Palma (*Eva Sikelianos*).
DVD. 2007. Desert Mountain Media. Region 1. (Cine Mexicano Contemporáneo).

Everlasting Moments (Maria Larssons eviga øgonblick) (Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Germany, 2008). *Director* Jan Troell; *Production Company* Blind Spot Pictures Oy, Final Cut Productions, Göta Film, Götafilm, Motlys, Schneider & Groos; *Producer* Christer Nilson, Teru Kaukoma, Thomas Stenderup; *Screenplay* Niklas Rådström, Jan Troell, Agneta Ulfstätter-Troell, Maja Öman (memoirs); *Photography* Misha Gavrjusjov, Jan Troell; *Editor* Jan Troell, Niels Pagh Anderson; *Sound* Eddie Axberg, Christoffer Demby; *Production Design* Peter Bävman; *Costume* Karen Gram; Katja Watkins; *Music* Matti Bye. Colour, 106 mins. Swedish/Finnish. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.
Leading Playwers: Maria Heiskanen (*Maria Larsson*), Mikael Persbrandt (*Sigfrid Larsson*), Jesper Christensen (*Sebastian Pedersen*), Birte Heribertsson (*Narration as Maja Larsson/Aunt Tora*), Callin Öhrvall (*Maja Larsson age 15-22*), Nellie Almgrun (*Maja Larsson age 8-10*).
DVD. 2009. Icon Film Co. UK, ICON10182. Region 2. DVD Extras: Photo gallery; Troell behind the Camera; Theatrical trailer.

Every Picture Tells a Story (UK, 1984). *Director* James Scott; *Production Company* Flamingo Pictures, Channel Four Films, Every Picture Ltd, TSI Films; *Producer* Christine Oestreicher; *Screenplay* Shane Connaughton; *Photography* Adam Barker-Mill; *Editor* Chris

Kelly; *Sound* Dean Humphreys; *Production Design* Loise Stjernsward; *Music* Michael Storey. Colour, 82 mins. English. 16mm.

Leading Players: Phyllis Logan (*Agnes Scott*), Alex Norton (*William Scott Sr.*), Leonard O'Malley (*William, aged 15-18*), John Docherty (*William, age 11-14*), Mark Airlie (*William, age 5-8*), Paul Wilson (*Tocher*), Willie Joss (*Grandfather*), Natasha Richardson (*Miss Bridle*), Jack McQuoid (*Mr. Trimble*).

DVD. Direct Cinema Limited. All regions.

Eyes of Van Gogh (USA, 2005). *Director and Screenplay*: Alexander Barnett; *Producer* Ashley Marsh, Marcia T. Mohuddin; *Production Company* Van Gogh Productions; *Photography* Ian A. Dudley; *Editor* Veronique N. Doumbe; *Sound* Jacob Burckhardt; *Production Design* Jerimiah Lawrence; *Art Direction* Lamarr Brown; *Costume* Michael Bevins; *Music* Mark Zaki. Colour, 111 mins. English.

Leading players: Alexander Barnett (*Vincent Van Gogh*), Matthew Marchetti (*Young Vincent*), Keith Perry (*Theo Van Gogh*), Lee Godart (*Paul Gauguin*), Celia Howard (*Anna Van Gogh*), Diane Agostini (*Kee Voss*).

Factory Girl (USA, 2006). *Director* George Hickenlooper; *Production Company* The Weinstein Company, L.I.F.T. Production, Holly Wiersma Productions; *Producer* Holly Wiersma, Kimberly C. Anderson, Morris Bart, Aaron Richard Golub, Malcolm Petal; *Screenplay* Captain Mauzner; *Photography* Michael Grady; *Editor* Dona E. Glauberman, Michael Leisne; *Sound* Dan Edelstein; *Production Design* Jeremy Reed; *Art Director* James A. Gelarden, Eva Radke; *Costume* John A. Dunn; *Music* Ed Shearmur. Colour, 99 mins. (US rated version 90 mins.). English. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.

Leading Players: Sienna Miller (*Edie Sedgwick*), Guy Pearce (*Andy Warhol*), Hayden Christensen (*Billy Quinn*), Jimmy Fallon (*Chuck Wein*), Jack Huston (*Gerald Malanga*), Armin Amiri (*Ondine*), Tara Summers (*Brigid Polk*), Ileana Douglas (*Diana Vreeland*). DVD. Paramount PHE9353. Region 2. Special features: Commentary by George Hickenlooper; Deleted scene; The Real Edie; Guy Pearce's video diary; Sienna Miller's audition tape; Making Factory Girl; Factory Girl on the Red Carpet; Theatrical trailer.

The Far Shore (L'autre rive) (Canada, 1976). *Director* Joyce Wieland; *Production Company* Far Shore Inc.; *Producer* Pierre Lamy, Judy Steed, Joyce Wieland; *Screenplay* Joyce Wieland, Bryan Barney; *Editor* George Appleby, Brian French; *Photography* Richard Leiterman; *Sound* Rod Haykin, Mel Lovell, Marcel Pothier; *Design* Anne Pritchard; *Costume* Aleida MacDonald; *Music* Douglas Pringle. Colour, 105 mins. English.

Leading Players: Céline Lomez (*Eulalie Turner*), Frank Moore (*Tom McLeod*), Lawrence Benedict (*Ross Turner*), Sean McCann (*Cluny*), Charlotte Blunt (*Mary McEwan*), Susan Petrie (*Kate*), Jean Carignan (*Fiddler*).

DVD. CFMDC, 2011. The Complete Works of Joyce Wieland. Vol. 5.

Frida (USA/Canada/Mexico, 2002) *Director* Julie Taymor; *Production Company* Handprint Entertainment, Lions Gate Films, Miramax Films; *Producer* Mark Amin, Brian Gibson, Mark Gill, Jill Sobel Messick, Margaret Rose Perenchio; *Screenplay* Clancy Sigal, Diane Lake, Gregory Nava, Anna Thomas from *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo* by Hayden Herrera; *Photography* Rodrigo Prieto; *Editor* Françoise Bennot; *Sound* Blake Leyh; *Production*

Designer Felipe Fernández del Paso; *Art Direction* Bernardo Trujillo; *Costume* Julie Weiss. Colour, 123 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.

Leading Players: Salma Hayek (*Frida Kahlo*), Alfred Molina (*Diego Rivera*), Geoffrey Rush (*Leon Trotsky*), Ashley Judd (*Tina Modotti*), Antonio Banderas (*David Alfaro Siqueirod*), Edward Norton (*Nelson Rockefeller*), Valeria Golino (*Lupe Marin*), Saffron Burrows (*Gracie*), Mia Maestro (*Cristina Kahlo*), Roger Rees (*Guillermo Kahlo*).

DVD.Miramax 26085. Region 1. 2 discs. Special features:Salma Hayek conversation; Julie Taymor commentary; Elliot Goldenthal selected scenes commentary; AFI Julie Taymor Q & A; Chavela Vargas interview; The Vision, design and music of Frida; Salma's recording sessions; Real locations of Frida's life and art; Portrait of an Artist; Two visual effects pieces; Frida Kahlo Facts; The voice of Lila Downs.

Frida *Naturaleza Vida* (Mexico, 1986) *Director* Paul Leduc; *Production Company* Clasa Films Mundiales; *Producer* Manuel Barbuchano Ponce, Dulce Kuri; *Screenplay* José Joaquin Blanco, Paul Leduc; *Photography* Ángel Goded, Jose Luis Esparza; *Editor* Rafael Castanedo; *Sound* Ernesto Cato Estrada, Penelope Simpson; *Design* Alejandro Luna; *Costume* Luiz Mariá Rodriguez. Colour, 108 mins. Spanish. Aspect Ratio 1:33. Shot in 16mm, blown up to 35mm.

Leading Players: Ofelia Medina (*Frida Kahlo*), Juan José Gurrola (*Diego Rivera*), Max Kerlow (*Leon Trotsky*), Claudio Brook (*Guillermo Kahlo*), Salvador Sánchez (*David Alfaro Siqueiros*), Cecilia Toussaint (*Frida's sister*), Ziwta Kerlow (*Trotsky's wife*), Margarita Sanz (*Friend*).

DVD. Multiregion. Televisa DVDA-3938

Full Moon Fables (USA, 2004). *Director/Screenplay/Editor* Edward B. Sherman; *Producer* Dan Depaola, Edward B. Sherman; *Production Company* Sleepwalker Films; *Photography* David Insley, Tom Schnaidt; *Sound* Dwayne Dell; *Costume* Marianne Powell-Parker; *Music* Alan Lee Silva. Colour. 110 mins. English. Aspect Ratio: 2.35: 1. Film comprises three short stories: State of the Artist, The Studio, Saturday Night at Madam Wing's.

Leading Players: Todd Wall (*Ed Sherman*), Dan Depaola (*Vincent Van Gogh*), Terence Currier (*Himself*), Paul Morella (*Franz Kafka*), Tara Garwood (*Ariel Mayflower*), Marilyn Hausfield (*Mrs Sherman*).

DVD.York Entertainment. Region 1.

Fur: An Imaginary Portrait of Diane Arbus (USA, 2006) *Director* Steven Shainberg; *Producer* Laura Bickford, Andrew Fierberg, William Pohlad, Bonnie Timmermann; *Production Company* Edward R. Pressman Film, River Road Entertainment, Iron Films (1), Vox 3 Films, Furtherfilm LLC; *Screenplay* Erin Cressida, Patricia Bosworth; *Photography* Bill Pope; *Editor* Kristina Boden, Keiko Deguchi; *Design* Amy Danger; *Art Direction* Nick Rallbovsky; *Set Decoration* Carrie Stewart; *Costume* Mark Bridges; *Music* Carter Burwell. Colour, 122 mins. English. Aspect ratio 1.85: 1.

Leading Players: Nicole Kidman (*Diane Arbus*), Robert Downey Jr. (*Lionel Sweeney*), Ty Burrell (*Allan Arbus*), Harris Yulin (*David Nemerov*), Jane Alexander (*Gertrude Nemerov*), Emmy Clarke (*Grace Arbus*), Genevieve McCarthy (*Sophie Arbus*).

DVD.Region 2. New Line Cinema EDR4120.

Girl with a Pearl Earring (UK,/Luxemburg/USA, 2003) *Director* Peter Webber; *Producer* Andy Parerson, Anand Tucker; *Production Company* Pathé Pictures, UK Film Council, Archer Street/Delux, Inside Track, Film Fund Luxembourg, Media Programme of the European Union, Wild Bear Films, Intermedia, Film Four, Lions Gate Films; *Screenplay* Olivia Hetreed, based on the novel by Tracy Chevalier; *Photography* Eduardo Serra; *Editor* Kate Evans; *Sound* Carlo Thoss; *Costume* Dien van Straalen; *Art Director* Christina Schaffer *Fine Artists* Licia Zappatore, Angela Castro; *Music* Alexandre Desplat. Colour, 100 mins. English. Aspect Ratio: 2.35:1.

Leading Players: Colin Firth (*Johannes Vermeer*), Scarlett Johansson (*Griet*), Tom Wilkinson (*Van Ruijven*), Judy Parfitt (*Maria Thins*), Cillian Murphy (*Pieter*), Essie Davis (*Catharina Vermeer*), Joanna Scanlan (*Tanneke*), Alakina Mann (*Cornelia Vermeer*). DVD, Region 2. Pathé, P-SGB P913801014. Special Features: The Making of Girl with a Pearl Earring; Deleted scenes; Theatrical trailer; Director/Producer commentary; Writer/Screenwriter commentary; Anatomy of a Scene Documentary.

Goitia: Un dios para sí mismo (Goitia: A God for Himself) (Mexico, 1989) *Director* Diego López Rivera; *Producer* Julio Derbez del Pino; *Production Company* Sociedad Cooperativa de Produccion Cinematográfica Jose Revueltas S.C.L., Fondo de Fomento a la Calidad Cinematográfica. Gobierno de Estado de Zacatecas, Imaginaria S.A., Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía (IMCINE); *Screenplay* Diego López Rivera, Jorge González de León, Raúl Zermeño, Juan Carlos Ruiz, Javier Sicilia, Enrique Vargas Torres; *Photography* Arturo de la Rosa, Jorge Suárez; *Editor* Sigfrido García; *Sound* Carlos Aguilar; *Art Direction* Mariá Teresa Pecanins; *Costumes* Orlette Ruiz. Colour, 110mins. Spanish.

Leading Players: José Carlos Ruiz (*Goitia*), Angélica Aragón, Fernando Balzarette, Alonso Echánore, Ana Ofelia Murguía, Alejandro Parodi, Mariá Teresa Pecanins (*Matron*), Patricia Reyes Spíndola, David Villalpando. DVD. Colección IMCINE. Mundo en DVD. DVDB-1308B. Region 4.

Goltzius and the Pelican Company (Netherlands/France/UK/Croatia, 2012).

Director/Screenplay Peter Greenaway; *Production Company* Kasander Film Company, Film and Music Entertainment (F & ME), Catharine Dussart Productions (CDP), MD Films, Netherlands Funf for Film, Rotterdam Film Fund, Centre National du Cinéma, Eurimages; *Producer* Kees Kasander; *Photography* Reinier Van Brummelen; *Editor* Elmer Leupen; *Sound* Maarten Van Gent; *Production Design* Ben Zuydwijk; *Art Direction* Rosie Staple; *Set Decoration* Ana Buljan; *Costume* Blanka Budak, Marrit van der Burgt; *Music* Marco Robino. Colour, 128 mins. English/French /Dutch.

Leading Players: F. Murray Abraham (*The Margrave*), Ramsey Nasr (*Hendrik Goltzius*); Vincent Riotta (*Ricardo Del Monte*), Flavio Parenti (*Eduard*), Halima Reijn (*Portia*), Francesco De Vito (*Rabbi Moab*).

Goya, historia de una soledad (Spain, 1971). *Director* Nino Quevedo; *Production Company* Surco Films *Producer* Carlos García Muñoz, Nino Quevedo, José SAgar; *Screenplay* Juan Cesarabea, Nino Quevedo, Alfonso Grosso; *Photography* José F. Aquayo, Luis Cuadrado; *Editor* Pablo González del Amo; *Art Director* Joaquin Pacheco; *Music* Luis de Pablo; *Historical Advisor* Luis Vázquez de Parga; Eastmancolor, 110 mins. Spanish. Aspect Ratio: Techniscope 2.35:1.

Leading Players: Francisco Rabal (*Goya*), Irina Demick (*Duchess d'Alba*), Jacques Perrin, José María Prada, Teresa de Río, Hugo Blanco, Maria Asquerino..

Goya en Burdeos (Goya in Bordeaux) (Spain/Italy, 1999). *Director* Carlos Saura; *Producer* Andrés Vicente Gómez; *Production Company* Lolafilms, Italian International Film (Rome); *Screenplay* Carlos Saura; *Photography* Vittorio Storaro; *Editor* Julia Juaniz; *Art Director* Pierre Louis Thévenet; *Costumes* Pedro Moreno; *Music* Roque Baños. Colour, 94 mins. Spanish. Aspect Ratio 2.00: 1.

Leading Players: Francisco Rabal (*Goya*), Jose Coronado (*Goya as a young man*), Dafne Fernandez (*Rosario*), Maribel Verdu (*Duchess of Alba*), Jose Maria Pou (*Godoy*), Eulalia Ramon (*Leocadia*).

DVD.Manga Films DVD030. Region 0. Special features: Theatrical trailer; Filmographies; Photo gallery.

Goya – oder Der arge Weg der Erkenntnis (Goya – The Path to Enlightenment) (East Germany/Soviet Union/Bulgaria/Yugoslavia/Poland, 1971). *Director* Konrad Wolf; *Production Company* Bosnia Film, Deutsche Film (DEFA), Lenfilm Studio; *Screenplay* Angel Vagenshtain, based on "This is the hour" by Lion Feuchtwanger; *Photography* Werner Bergmann, Konstantin Ryzhov; *Sound* Garri Belenky, Eduard Vanunts, Yefim Yudin; *Production Design* Alfred Hirschmeier, Valeri Yurkevich; *Music* Faradzh Karayen, Kara Karayev. Colour, 136 mins. German. Aspect Ratio: 2.20:1.

Leading Players: Donatas Banionis (*Goya*), Olivera Katarina (*Duchess of Alba*). Fred Düren (*Esteve*), Tatyana Lolova (*Queen Maria Luisa*), Rolf Hoppe (*Karl IV*), Mieczyslaw Voit (*Chief Inquisitor*).

DVD.First Run Features 913485D. Digitally restored. Bonus materials: Interviews with Angel Wagenstein (scriptwriter) and Tatjana Lolowa (actress).

Goya's Ghosts (USA/Spain, 2006). *Director* Milos Forman; *Production Company* The Saul Zaentz Company, Kanzaman, Antena 3 Televisión, Xuxa Producciones S.L.: *Producer* Saul Zaentz; *Screenplay* Milos Forman, Jean-Claude Carrière; *Photography* Javier Aguirresarobe; *Editor* Adam Boome; *Sound* Douglas Murray; *Production Design* Patricia von Brandenstein; *Art Direction* José María Alarcón; *Set Decoration* Emilio Ardura; *Costume* Yvonne Blake; *Music* Varhan Bauer. Colour, 113 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.

Leading Players: Javier Bardem (*Lorenzo*), Natalie Portman (*Inés/Alicia*), Stellan Skarsgård (*Francisco Goya*), Randy Quaid (*King Carlos IV*), José Luis Gomez (*Tomás Bilbatúa*), Blanca Portilo (*Queen María Luisa*).

Grant North (UK, 1969). *Director/Screenplay* Jack Hazan; *Production Company* Hazan Richards; *Photography* Andy Carchrae; *Editor* David Procter; *Music* Colin Richards; *Norwegian Folksong* Peter Pears. Colour, 15 mins. English.

Participants: Keith Grant, Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears.

Video version (with French subtitles) at

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x89qrs_grant-north-jack-hazan_shortfilms Accessed 30/07/2009.

El Greco (Italy/France/Spain, 1966). *Director* Luciano Salce; *Producer* Eliseo Boschi; *Production Company* Aco Film, Les Films de Siècle; *Screenplay* Guy Elmes, Luigi Magni, Massimo Franciosa, Luciano Salce; *Photography* Leonida Barboni; *Editor* Nino Baragli; *Sound* Renato Cadueri; *Art Director* Luigi Scaccianoce; *Costumes* Danilo Donati; *Music* Ennio Morricone. Colour, 96 mins. Italian/English. Aspect Ratio 2.35: 1.
Leading Players: Mel Ferrer (*El Greco – Domenico Teotocopulo*), Rosanna Schiaffino (*Jeronima de las Cuevas*), Mario Feliciani (*Nino de Guevara*), Adolfo Celi (*Don Miguel de las Cuevas*), Fernando Rey (*Felipe the Second*), Giulio Donnini, Renzo Giovanpietro, Gabriella Giorgelli, Franco Giacobini.

El Greco (Greece/Spain/Hungary, 2007). *Director* Yannis Smaragdis; *Production Company* [Alexandros Film](#), [Graal](#), [Greek Film Center](#); *Producer* Eleni Smaragdi; *Screenplay* Jackie Pavlenko, based on the book by Dimitris Siatopoulos; *Photography* Aris Stavrou; *Editor* Yannis Tsitsopoulos; *Sound* Marinos Athanasopoulos; *Art Director* Damianos Zarifis; *Costume* Lala Huete; *Music* Vangelis. Colour 119 mins. English/Spanish/Greek/Italian. Aspect Ratio 1.78: 1.
Leading Players: Nick Ashdon (*El Greco*), Juan Diego Botto (*Niño de Guevara*), Laia Marull (*Jerónima de las Cuevas*), Lakis Lazopoulos (*Nikolos*), Sotiris Moustakas (*Titian*), Dimitra Matsouka (*Francesca*).
 DVD. 2007. Alexandros Films. 2 discs. Region 2.

Hip Hip Hurra! (Hip Hip Hurray) (Sweden/Denmark/Norway, 1987). *Director/Screenwriter* Kiell Grede; *Production Company* Det Danske Filminstitut, Norsk Film, Palle Fogtdal A/S, Stiftelsen Svenska Filminstitutet, Sandrew Film 86 KB; *Producer* Klas Olofsson, Katinka Faragó; *Photographer* Sten Holmberg; *Editor* Sigurd Hallman; *Sound* Lasse Summanen, Lasse Ulandor; *Design* Peter Høimark; *Costume* Kerstin Lokrantz, Jette Termann; *Music* Fuzzy. Eastmancolor, 110 mins. Swedish/Danish. Aspect Ratio 1.66:1.
Leading Players: Stellan Skarsgård (*Sören Krøyer*), Lene Brøndum (*Lille*), Pia Vieth (*Marie Krøyer*), Helge Jordal (*Krohg*), Morten Grunwald (*Michael Archer*), Ulla Henningsen (*Anna Archer*), Karen-Lise Mynster (*Martha Johansen*), Jesper Christensen (*Viggo Johansen*), Stefan Sauk (*Hugo Alfvén*).
 VHS VIDEOTAPE. First Run Features.

The Horse's Mouth (UK, 1958). *Director* Ronald Neame; *Producer* Albert Fennell; *Production Company* Knightsbridge Films; *Screenplay* Alec Guinness, from the novel by Joyce Carey; *Photography* Arthur Ibbetson; *Editor* Anne V. Coates; *Sound* John Cox; *Art Director* Bill Andrews; *Jimson's Paintings* John Bratby; *Music* Sergei Prokofiev. Technicolor, 95mins., 8565 feet. English. Aspect Ratio 1.66:1.
Leading Players: Alec Guinness (*Gulley Jimson*), Kay Walsh (*Dee Coker*), Renée Houston (*Sarah Monday*), Mike Morgan (*Nosey*), Robert Coote (*Sir William Beeder*), Veronica Turleigh (*Lady Beeder*), Michael Gough (*Abel*), Reginald Beckwith (*Captain Jones*).
 DVD, Region 1, 2002. The Criterion Collection, Catalogue No. 154. Special Features: 2001 video interview with Ronald Neame; *Daybreak Express*, short documentary by D.A. Pennebaker, plus a video introduction by him; Original theatrical trailer.

I Shot Andy Warhol (UK/USA, 1996). *Director* Mary Harron; *Producer* Tom Kalin, Christine Vachon; *Production Company* Playhouse International Pictures, Samuel Goldwyn

Company, BBC Arena, Killer Films; *Screenplay* Mary Harron. Daniel Minahan; *Photography* Ellen Kuras; *Editor* Keith Reamer; *Sound* Kevin Lee; *Designer* Thérèse DePrez; *Costume* David C. Robinson; *Music* John Cage. Colour, 103 mins., 2885m. English. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.

Leading Players: Lili Taylor (*Valerie Jean Solanus*), Jared Harris (*Andy Warhol*), Martha Plimpton (*Stevie*), Stephen Dorff (*Candy Darling*), Lothaire Bluteau (*Maurice Girodias*), Michael Imperioli (*Ondine*), Donovan Leitch (*Gerard Malanga*), Reg Rogers (*Paul Morrissey*), Tahngé Welch (*Viva*), Jamie Harrold (*Jackie Curtis*), Coco MacPherson (*Brigid Berlin*), Myriam Cyr (*Ultra Violet*), James Lyons (*Billy Name*).

DVD. MGM Entertainment B0000FIGEZC. Region 2. 2006.

Klimt : A Viennese Fantasy à la Maniere de Schnitzler (Austria, 2006) *Director* Raúl Ruiz; *Production Company* EPO-Film, Film-Lime Productions, Lunar Films, Gemini Films, Andreas Schmid; *Producer* Dieter Pochlatko, Arno Ortmaier, Matthew Justice, Andreas Schmid; *Editor* Valeria Sarmiento; *Photography* Ricardo Aronovich, *Costumes* Brigit Hutter; *Designer* Rudi Czette; Katharina Wöppermann; *Music* Jorge Arriagada. Colour, 97 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 1.78:1.

Leading Players: John Malkovich (*Gustav Klimt*), Saffron Burrows (*Lea de Castro*), Veronica Ferres (*Midi*), Stephen Dillane (*Secretary*), Nikolai Kinski (*Egon Schiele*), Sandra Ceccarelli (*Serena Lederer*).

DVD. Koch Lorber (KLF-DV-3151). Region 1. Extras: "Making of" featurette; Original theatrical trailer.

Lautrec (aka Toulouse-Lautrec) (Spain/France, 1998). *Director/Screenplay* Roger Planchon; *Production Company* Les Films du Losange, Le Studio Canal+, France 3 Cinéma, Sociedad General de Cine S.A.; *Distributor* Les Films du Losange; *Producer* Margaret Ménégoz; *Photography* Gérard Simon; *Editor* Isabelle Devinck; *Production Design* Jacques Rouxel; *Costume* Pierre-Jean Larroque; *Sound* Jean-Pierre Halbwachs, Thierry Lebon, Jean Minondo; *Music* Jean-Pierre Fouquey. Colour, 128 mins. French. Aspect Ratio 2.35 : 1.

Leading Players: Régis Royer (*Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec*), Elsa Zylberstein (*Suzanne Valadon*), Anémone (*Comtesse Adèle de Toulouse-Lautrec*), Claude Rich (*Comte Alphonse de Toulouse-Lautrec*), Hélène Babu (*La Goulue*), Jean-Marie Bigard (*Aristide Bruant*), Victor Garrivier (*Edgar Degas*).

DVD. Doriane Films. Region 2.

Life Lessons see **New York Stories**

Little Ashes (UK, 2008). *Director* Paul Morrison; *Distributor* Regent Releasing (USA); *Production Company* APT Films/ Aria Films/Factotum Barcelona S.L./Met Film Production/Met Film; *Producer* Luke Montagu; *Screenplay* Philippa Goslett; *Photography* Adam Suschitzky; *Editor* Rachel Tunnard; *Costumes* Antonio Belart; *Sound* Samir Foco; *Visual Effects* Shanaullah Umerji; *Music* Miguel Mera. Colour, 112 mins. English.

Leading Players: Javier Beltrán (*Federico Garcia Lorca*), Robert Pattinson (*Salvador Dalí*), Matthew McNulty (*Luis Buñuel*), Marina Gatell (*Margherita*).

DVD. Kaleidoscope Home Entertainment KAL8024. Region 2. Bonus features : Auditions – Javier Beltran and Marina Gatell ; Interviews – Paul Morrison, Philippa Goslett, Javier

Beltran, Matthew McNulty, Marina Gatell, Arly Jover ; Behind the scenes footage – the shooting of 7 scenes.

Love is the Devil: Study for a Portrait of Francis Bacon (UK/France/Japan, 1998). *Director* John Maybury; *Distributor* Artificial Eye; *Production Company* BBC Films with BFI Production Board, Arts Council of England, Première Heure, Uplink, Partners in Crime, State Films; *Producer* Chiara Menage; *Screenplay* John Maybury, James Cohen, Don Jordan; *Photography* John Mathieson; *Editor* Daniel Goddard; *Art Director* Christina Moore; *Costumes* Annie Symons; *Sound* Paul Davies. Colour, 8154 ft., 90 mins, 36 secs. English. Aspect Ratio 1.85:1.

Leading Players: Derek Jacobi (*Francis Bacon*), Daniel Craig (*George Dyer*), Tilda Swinton (*Muriel Belcher*), Karl Johnson (*John Deakin*), Anne Lambton (*Isabel Rawsthorne*), Annabel Brooks (*Henrietta Moraes*), Daniel Farson (*Adrian Scarborough*), Hamish Bowles (*David Hockney*).

DVD1. Strand Releasing (VD 9821). Region 1.

DVD2. British Film Institute (BFID776). Region 2. Special features: Commentary by John Maybury and Derek Jacobi; Short film The Colony – A Documentary Preview; Interview with producers Ben Gibson and Chiara Menage; Booklet including essays by Michael O'Pray and Christopher Frayling.

Luces y sombras (Spain, 1988). *Director* Jaime Camino; *Production Company* Tibidabo Films; *Screenplay* Jaime Camino, José Sanchis Sinisterra; *Photography* Josep M. Civit; *Sound* Ricard Casals; *Design* Eduardo Arranz Bravo; *Music* Xavier Montsalvatge. Colour/bw. 105 mins. Spanish.

Leading Players: José Luis Gómez (*Diego de Valazquez*), Jack Shephard (*Teo*), Ángela Molina (*Charo*), Fermí Reixach (*King Philip iv*).

Lust for Life (USA, 1956). *Director* Vincente Minnelli; *Production Company* Loew's Incorporated/ Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer; *Producer* John Houseman; *Screenplay* Norman Corwin, from the novel by Irving Stone; *Photography* Freddie Young; Russell Harlan; *Editor* Adrienne Fazan; *Art Director* Cedric Gibbons; *Costumes* Walter Plunkett; *Music* Miklos Rozsa; *Colour Consultant* Charles K. Hagedon; Metrocolor, 122 mins, 10991 feet, Stereo. English. Cinemascope, Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.

Leading Players: Kirk Douglas (*Vincent van Gogh*), Anthony Quinn (*Paul Gauguin*), James Donald (*Theo van Gogh*), Pamela Brown (*Christine*), Everett Sloane (*Doctor Gachet*), Niall MacGinnis (*Roulin*), Noel Purcell (*Anton Mauve*), Henry Daniell (*Theodorus van Gogh*), Madge Kennedy (*Anna Cornelia Van Gogh*), Jill Bennett (*Willemien*), Jeannette Sterke (*Kay*), Lionel Jeffries (*Doctor Peyron*), Laurence Naismith (*Doctor Bosman*).

DVD. Warner Bros (Z166988), 2006. Region 2. Special features: Commentary by Dr. Drew Casper; Trailer. 117 mins.

Il Magnifico Avventuriero (aka The Burning of Rome) (Italy/France/Spain, 1963) *Director* Riccardo Freda; *Producer* Ermanno Donati, Luigi Carpentieri; *Production Company* Panda, Hispamer Film, Les Films Du Centaure; *Screenplay* Filippo Sanjust; *Photography* Julio Plaza Hortas, Raffaele Masciocchi; *Editor* Ornella Micheli; *Designer* Aurelio Crugnola; *Costumes* Marisa Crimi; *Music* Francesco De Masi; *Sculptor* Gianni Gianese. Colour. 90 mins. Italian. CinemaScope, Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.

Leading Players: Françoise Fabian (*Lucrezia*), Brett Halsey (*Benvenuto Cellini*), Claudia Mori (*Piera*), Jacinto San Emeterio (*Francisco 1*), Andrea Bosis (*Michelangelo*), José Nieto (*Connestabile di Borbone*), Felix Dafauce (*Frangipani*).

Marie Krøyer (Balladen om Marie Krøyer) (Denmark/Sweden, 2012). *Director* Bille August; *Production Company* Film I Väst, SF Film Production, SF Film, Det Danske Filminstitut; *Producer* Michael Fleischer, Karoline Leth; *Screenplay* Peter Asmussen, based on the book "The Passion of Marie Krøyer" by Anastassia Arnold; *Photography* Dirk Brüel; *Editor* Gerd Tjur; *Sound* Niels Arild; *Production Design* Josefin Åsberg; *Art Direction* Søren Schwartzberg; *Costume* Manon Rasmussen; *Music* Stefan Nilsson. Aspect Ratio 2.35: 1. Colour, 102 mins. Danish,.

Leading Players: Birgitte Hjort Sørensen (*Marie Krøyer*), Søren Sætter-Lassen (*P. S. 'Søren' Krøyer*), Sverrir Gudnason (*Hugo Alfvén*); Vera Torpp Larssen (*Vibeke Krøyer*), Lene Maria Christensen (*Anna Norrie*), Tommy Kenter (*Sagfører Lachmann*), Nanna Buhl Andresen (*Henny Brodersen*).

BLU-RAY. Region B. SF Film Production 451574.

Mazeppa (France, 1993) *Director* Bartabas; *Production Company* MK2 Productions, CED Productions, La SEP Cinéma, France 3, Canal+, PROCIREP; *Screenplay* Bartabas, Claude-Henri Buffard, Homeric; *Producer* Marin Karmitz; *Photography* Bernard Zitzermann; *Editor* Joseph Licide; *Sound* Jean Gargonne; *Design* Emile Ghigo; *Costume* Christine Guégan, Marie-Laure Schakmundes; *Music* Jean-Pierre Drouet. Colour, 111mins. French. *Leading Players*: Miguel Bosé (*Gericault*), Bartabas (*Franconi*), Brigitte Marty (*Mouste*), Eva Schakmundes (*Alexandrine*), Fatima Aibout (*Cascabelle*), Bakary Sangaré (*Joseph*). DVD. Mk2 éditions. 2005. EDV 1264. Region 2. Special Features: Introduction by Françoise Giroud; Making of Featurette; Mazeppa by Victor Hugo; Bio-filmographies.

Memories from the Garden of Etten (La Veillée/ La Passion Van Gogh/ The Van Gogh Wake). (France/ Belgium, 1990). *Director* Samy Pavel; *Producer* Georges Hoffmann, Martine Kelly, Alain Keytsman; *Production Company* Alain Keytsman Production/ Héliopolis Films/ Triplan Productions; *Screenplay* Armand Eloi, Jeanine Hebinck, Samy Pavel, Juliette Thierrée *Photography* Nino Celeste [Sebastiano], Jean Clave, Sebastian Veyrin-Forrer; *Editor* Isabelle Dedieu; *Art Director* Patrice Biarant, Emmanuelle Sage; *Sound* Ricardo Castro. Colour, 90 mins. French.

Leading Players: Idit Cebula (*Elizabeth*), Armand Eloi (*Pasteur*), Irène Jacob (*Johanna*), Jean-Pierre Lorit (*Théo Van Gogh*), Maria Meriku (*La Mère*), Philippe Volter (*Aurier*).

The Mill and the Cross (Mlyn I Krzyz) (Sweden/Poland, 2011). *Director/Sound* Lech Majewski; *Screenplay* Michael Francis Gibson, Lech Majewski from Gibson's book Bruegel: The Mill and the Cross; *Production Company* Angelus Silesius, Polish Film Institute, Telewizja Polska (TVP), Bokomotiv Freddy Olsson Foundation, Studio Odeon, Silesia Film, 24Media, Supra Film, Arkana Studio, Piramida Film; *Producer* George Lekovic; *Photography* Lech Majewski, Adam Sikora; *Editor* Eliot Ems, Norbert Radzik; *Design* Marcel Slawinski, Katarzyna Sobanska-Strzalkowska; *Art Direction* Stanislaw Porczyk; *Costume* Dorota Roqueplo; *Music* Lech Malewski, Józef Skrzek. Colour. 92 mins. English/Spanish. Aspect ratio 1.78: 1.

Leading Players: Rutger Hauer (*Pieter Bruegel*), Charlotte Rampling (*Mary*), Michael York (*Nicolaes Jonghelinck*), Joanna Litwin (*Marijken Bruegel*).

Miss Potter (UK, 2006) *Director* Chris Noonan; *Producer* David Kirchner; *Production Company* Hopping Mad Productions (IOM) Ltd/ UK Film Council/ Phoenix Pictures/ Momentum Pictures/ Isle of Man Films/ BBC Films/Grosvenor Park Media Limited/ Summit Entertainment; *Screenplay* Richard Maltby Jr; *Photography* Andrew Dunn; *Editor* Robin Sales; *Sound* Peter Lindsay; *Art Director* Grant Armstrong; *Costumes* Anthony Powell; *Music* Nigel Westlake; *Historical Advisor* Jenny Uglow. Colour, 93 mins, 8354ft. English. Aspect Ratio 2.35:1.

Leading Players: Renée Zellweger (*Beatrix Potter*), Ewan McGregor (*Norman Warne*), Emily Watson (*Millie Warne*), Barbara Flynn (*Helen Potter*), Bill Paterson (*Rupert Potter*), Lloyd Owen (*William Heelis*).

DVD.Momentum (MP632D).Region 2. Special features: Making of Miss Potter; Music video of Katie Melua's 'When You Taught Me How to Dance'.

The Moderns (USA, 1988). *Director* Alan Rudolph; *Producer* Carolyn Pfeiffer, David Blocker; *Screenplay* Alan Rudolph, Jon Bradshaw; *Photography* Toyomichi Kurita, Jan Kiesser; *Editor* Debra T. Smith; *Production Designer* Steven Legler; *Music* Mark Isham. Colour/B & W, 126 mins. English. Aspect Ratio, 1.85:1.

Leading Players: Keith Carradine (*Nick Hart*), Linda Fiorentino (*Rachel Stone*), Genevieve Bujold (*Libby Valentin*), Geraldine Chaplin (*Nathalie de Ville*), Wallace Shawn (*Oiseau*), John Lone (*Bertram Stone*), Kevin J. O'Connor (*Ernest Hemingway*), Elsa Raven (*Gertrude Stein*), Ali Giron (*Alice B. Toklas*).

DVD. MGM DVD (1003777). Region 1. Includes Original Theatrical Trailer.

Modigliani (USA/ France/Germany/ Italy/Romania/UK, 2004). *Director/Screenplay* Mick Davis; *Producer* Luc Campeau; *Production Company* Lucky 7 Productions LLC, Media Pro Pictures, Alicéléo, Bauer Martinez Studios, Buskin Film, CineSon Entertainment, Frame Werk Production GmbH & Co. KG., France 3 Cinéma, Istituto Luce, The Tower Limited Liability Partnership, UKFS; *Photography* Emmanuel Kadosh; *Editor* Emma E. Hickox; *Designer* Giantito Burchiellaro; *Art Director* Luigi Marchione, Vlad Vieru; *Costumes* Pam Downe; *Sound* Tim Lewiston; *Music* Guy Farley. Colour, 128 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 1.85:1.

Leading Players: Andy Garcia (*Amedeo Modigliani*), Elsa Zylberstein (*Jeanne Hébuteme*), Omid Djalili (*Pablo Picasso*), Hippolyte Girardot (*Maurice Utrillo*), Eva Herzigova (*Olga Picasso*), Udo Keir (*Max Jacob*), Susie Amy (*Beatrice Hastings*), Peter Capaldi (*Jean Cocteau*), Miriam Margolyes (*Gertrude Stein*), Theodore Danetti (*Renoir*), Ion Siminie (*Claude Monet*), Beatrice Chiriac (*Frida Kahlo*).

DVD.Bauer Martinez Studios. Region 2.

Moj Nikifor (My Nikifor) (Poland, 2004). *Director* Krzysztof Krause; *Production Company* Agencja Produkcji Filmowej, Canal+Polska, Studio Filmowe Zebra See; *Producer* Juliusz Machulski; *Screenplay* Krzysztof Krause, Joanna Kos; *Photography* Krzysztof Ptak; *Editor* Krzysztof Szpetmanski, *Sound* Blazej Kukla; *Production Design* Magdalena Dipont; *Costume* Dorota Roqueplo; *Music* Bartłomiej Gliniak. Colour, 97 mins. Polish.

Leading Players: Krystyna Feldman (*Nikifor*), Roman Gancarczyk (*Marian Wlosinski*), Jerzy Gudejko (*Ryszard Nowak*), Jowita Miondlukowska (*Cleaning Lady*), Lucyna Malec (*Hanna Wlosinski*), Artur Steranko (*Doctor Rosen*).

DVD. Bestfilm D199. Region 2.

Montparnasse 19 (aka *Les Amants de Montparnasse, The Lovers of Montparnasse, Modigliani of Montparnasse, Hero of Montmartre, Heroes in White, and Modigliani*) (France, 1958). *Director* Jacques Becker, Max Ophüls; *Production Company* Franco London Films, Astra; *Screenplay* Jacques Becker, Max Ophüls, Henri Jeanson, based on the novel "Les Montparnos" by Georges-Michel Michel; *Photography* Christian Matras; *Music* Georges Van Parys, Paul Misraki, Bach. B/W, 120 mins. French. Aspect ratio 1.66: 1. *Leading Players:* Gérard Philipe (*Amedeo Modigliani*), Lilli Palmer (*Béatrice Hastings*), Anouk Aimée (*Jeanne Hébuterne*), Gérard Séty (*Léopold Sborowsky*), Lino Ventura (*Morel*), Lila Kedrova (*Mme Sborowski*), Lea Padovani (*Rosalie*). VHS VIDEOTAPE. RenéChateau Video (Les années cinquante). BLU-RAY. Gaumont Video. 2012.

The Moon and Sixpence (USA, 1942). *Director* Albert Lewin; *Production Company* David Loew-Albert Lewin; *Screenplay* Albert Lewin from the novel by W. Somerset Maugham; *Photography* John F. Seitz; *Editor* George Hively, Richard L. Van Enger; *Art Director* Gordon Wiles; *Music* Dimitri Tiomkin. B&W/Colour, 88 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 1.37: 1. *Leading Players:* George Sanders (*Charles Strickland*), Florence Bates (*Tiare Johnson*), Doris Dudley (*Blanche Stroeve*), Steven Geray (*Dirk Stroeve*), Elena Verdugo (*Ata*), Herbert Marshall (*Geoffrey Wolfe*), Albert Bassermann (*Doctor Coutras*), Eric Blore (*Captain Nichols*).

DVD. VCI Entertainment (8482). Region 0. Disc contains both the original theatrical release in B&W and colour, plus the full B&W version.

Moulin Rouge (UK, 1953). *Director* John Huston *Production Company* Romulus Films, Moulin Productions, Independent Film Distributors Ltd; *Producer* Jack Clayton; *Screenplay* John Huston, Anthony Veiller, based on the novel by Pierre La Mure; *Editor* Ralph Kemplen; *Photography* Oswald Morris; *Sound* A.E. Rudolph, E. Law; *Art Director* Paul Sheriff; *Costumes* Marcel Vertes; *Music* Georges Auric; *Special Colour Consultant* Eliot Elisofon. Technicolor, 123 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 1.37: 1.

Leading Players: José Ferrer (*Henri Toulouse-Lautrec/Comte de Toulouse-Lautrec*), Zsa Zsa Gabor (*Jane Avril*), Suzanne Flon (*Myriamme Hayem*), Collette Marchand (*Marie Charlet*), Claude Nollier (*Comtesse de Toulouse-Lautrec*), Katherine Kath (*La Goulue*), Harold Kasket (*Zidler*), Georges Lannes (*Sergeant Balthazar Patou*).

DVD.Weinerworld (WNRD5030).Region 2. 114 mins.

Moulin Rouge (USA/Australia, 2001). *Director* Baz Luhrmann.; *Producer* Martin Brown, Baz Luhrmann, Fred Baron; *Production Company* Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, Bazmark Films, Angel Studios; *Screenplay* Baz Luhrmann, Craig Pearce; *Photography* Donald M. McAlpine; *Editor* Jill Bilcock; *Designer* Catherine Martin; *Costume* Catherine Martin, Angus Strathie; *Music* Craig Armstrong. Colour, 130 mins. English. Panavision, Aspect Ratio, 2.35:1.

Leading Players: Nicole Kidman (*Satine*), Ewan McGregor (*Christian*), John Leguizamo (*Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec*), Jim Broadbent (*Harold Zidler*), Richard Roxburgh (*Duke of Worcester*).

DVD. 20th Century Fox F1-SGB 19945DVD. 2 discs. Region 2. Bonus Features: Production commentary by Baz Luhrmann, Catherine Martin and Don McAlpine; Writer's commentary with Baz Luhrmann and Craig Pearce; Behind the Red Velvet Curtain; Uncut dance sequences; Multi-Angles; Behind the scenes featurettes.

My Left Foot (GB, 1989) *Director* Jim Sheridan; *Producer* Noel Pearson; *Production Company* Ferndale Films, Granada Television, Radio Telefis Éireann (RTÉ); *Screenplay* Shane Connaughton, Jim Sheridan, from the autobiography of Christy Brown; *Photography* Jack Conroy; *Editor* J. Patrick Duffner; *Sound* Ron Davis; *Production Designer* Austen Spriggs; *Costume* Joan Bergin; *Music* Elmer Bernstein. Technicolor, 103 mins, English. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.

Leading Players: Daniel Day Lewis (*Christy Brown*), Ray McAnally (*Mr. Brown*), Brenda Fricker (*Mrs. Brown*), Ruth McCabe (*Mary Carr*), Fiona Shaw (*Dr. Eileen Cole*), Eanna MacLiam (*Benny*), Alison Whelan (*Sheila*), Hugh O'Connor (*Younger Christy*), Declan Croghan (*Tom*), Cyril Cusack (*Lord Castlewelland*), Adrian Dunbar (*Peter*).

DVD. Granada Ventures Limited VFD17219. Region 2.

Der Nackte Mann auf dem Sportplatz (The Naked Man on the Sports Ground) (East Germany, 1973). *Director* Konrad Wolf; *Production Company* Deutsche Film (DEFA), Studio Babelsberg; *Distributor* VEB Progress Film-Vertrieb; *Screenplay* Wolfgang Kohlhaase, Konrad Wolf; *Photography* Werner Bergmann; *Music* Karl-Ernst Sasse. Orwocolor, 101 mins, 2766 metres. German. Aspect Ratio 1.66: 1.

Leading Players: Kurt Böwe (*Kemmel*), Ursula Karusseit (*Gisi Kemmel*), Martin Trettau (*Hannes*), Elsa Grube-Deister (*LPG-Vorsitzende*), Marga Legal (*Referentin*), Ute Lubosch (*Regine*), Günter Schubert (*Maurer*).

The Naked Maja (USA/Italy/France, 1959). *Director* Henry Koster; *Production Company* Titanus Films, Société Générale de Cinématographie (S.G.C.); *Producer* Goffréd Lombardo, Silvio Clementelli; *Screenplay* Norman Corwin, Giorgio Prosperi, from a story by Oscar Saul and Talbot Jennings; *Photography* Giuseppe Rotunno; *Editor* Mario Serandrei; *Sound* Mario Messina; *Production Design* Piero Filippone; *Set Decoration* Gino Brosio; *Costume* Maria Baronj, Dario Cecchi; *Music* Angelo Lavagnino. Technicolor, 111 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 2.35: 1.

Leading Players: Ava Gardner (*Duchess of Alba*), Anthony Franciosa (*Francisco Goya*), Amedeo Nazzari (*Manuel Godoy*), Gino Cervi (*King Carlos IV*), Lea Padovani (*Queen Maria Luisa*).

New York Stories (USA, 1989). *Production Company* Touchstone Pictures. Colour, 119 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1. Portmanteau film of three parts, *Life Without Zoe* (Francis Ford Coppola), *Oedipus Wrecks* (Woody Allen) and

Life Lessons. *Director* Martin Scorsese; *Producer* Barbara DeFina; *Screenplay* Richard Price; *Photography* Néstor Almendros; *Editor* Thelma Schoonmaker; *Sound* Bruce Pross; *Production Design* Kristi Zea; *Art Direction* W. Steven Graham; *Set Decoration* Nina F. Ramsey; *Costume* John Dunn.

Leading Players: Nick Nolte (*Lionel Dobie*), Rosanna Arquette (*Paulette*), Steve Buscemi (*Gregory Stark*), Ileana Douglas (*Paulette's friend*), Deborah Harry (*Girl at Blind Alley*). DVD. Touchstone Home Video (ZIBBED888462). Region 2.

Nightwatching (Netherlands/GB/Poland/Canada, 2007). *Director/Screenplay* Peter Greenaway; *Producer* Kees Kasander; *Production Company* Kasander Film Company, No Equal Entertainment, Yeti Films, Gremi Film Production, ContentFilm International, Wales Creative IP Fund, UK Film Council, Polski Instytut Sztuki Filmowej, NFI Productions, UK Film Council New Cinema Fund; *Photography* Reinier van Brummelen; *Editor* Karen Porter; *Sound* Maurice Hillier; *Production Design* Maarten Piersma; *Art Director* James Willcock; *Costumes* Jagna Janicka, Marrit van der Burgt; *Music* Włodzimierz Pawlik. Colour, 134 mins. English. Aspect ratio 2.35: 1.

Leading Players: Martin Freeman (*Rembrandt van Rijn*), Emily Holmes (*Hendrickje*), Michael Teigen (*Carel Fabritius*), Toby Jones (*Gerard Dou*), Nathalie Press (*Marieke*), Jodhi May (*Geertje*), Richard McCabe (*Bloefeldt*), Eva Birthistle (*Saskia*), Adrian Lukis (*Frans Banning Cocq*).

DVD. Video/Film Express 501203. Region 2. 2 discs. Set also contains documentary film "Rembrandt's J'Accuse".

Óscar: una pasión surrealista (Oscar: The Color of Destiny) (Spain, 2008)

Director/Producer Lucas Fernández; *Production Company* Report Line; *Screenplay* Lucas Fernández, Eduardo del Llano; *Photography* Rafael Bolaños; *Editor* Eddy Cardellach; *Production Design/Art Direction* Carlos Bodelós; *Costume* Tatiana Hernández; *Sound* Bela María da Costa; *Music* Diego Navarro. Colour, 108 mins. Spanish.

Leading Players: Joaquim de Almeida (*Oscar Domínguez*), Victoria Abril (*Ana*), Emma Suárez (*Eva*), Jorge Perugorría (*Román*), Paola Bontempi (*Roma*), Toni Cantó (*Estrada*), Caco Senante (*Montero*).

Paradise Found (Australia/UK/France/ Germany, 2003). *Director* Mario Andreacchio; *Producer* Georges Campana, Mario Andreacchio, Frank Huebner; *Distributor* Studio Canal, Australian Film Finance Corporation; *Production Company* Adelaide Motion Picture Company, Apollomedia, Grosvenor Park Productions, Le Sabre; *Photography* Geoffrey Simpson; *Screenplay* John Goldsmith; *Editor* Edward McQueen-Mason; *Production Designer* Jean Vincent Puzos; *Costumes* Fabio Perrone; *Music* Frank Strangio. Colour, 94 mins. English. Aspect ratio 2.35: 1.

Leading Players: Kiefer Sutherland (*Paul Gauguin*), Nastassja Kinski (*Mette Gauguin*), Alun Armstrong (*Pissaro*), Thomas Heinze (*Schuff*), Chris Haywood (*Arnaud*), Nicholas Hope (*Maurrin*).

DVD. Studio Canal/ Lionsgate, Catalogue No. 20721. Region 1. 2007.

The Picasso Summer (USA, 1969). *Director* Serge Bourguignon, Robert Sallin; *Producer* Bruce Campbell, Wes Herschensohn; *Production Company* Warner Brothers/Seven Arts; *Screenplay* Edwin Boyd, Ray Bradbury; *Photography* Vilmos Zsigmond; *Editor* William Paul Dornisch; *Sound* Robert Biard; *Production Design* Jeremy Kay; *Art Director* Damien Lanfranchi; *Music* Michel Legrand; *Animation* Wes Herschensohn. Colour, 90 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 1.78: 1.

Leading Players: Albert Finney (*George Smith*), Yvette Mimieux (*Alice Smith*), Luis Miguel Dominguín (*Himself*), Theodore Marcuse (*The Host*), Jim Connell (*The Artist*).
DVD. Warner Archive. Region 0.

Picassos äventyr (The Adventures of Picasso/ Picasso's Adventures) (Sweden, 1978).
Director Tage Danielsson; *Production Company* Svenska Ord, Svensk Filmindustri;
Photographer Tony Forsberg, Roland Sterner; *Editor* Jan Persson; *Sound* Per Carleson,
Christer Furubrand; *Art Director* Hans Alfredson; *Set Designer* Stig Boquist; *Costume* Mona
Forsen; *Music* Gunnar Svensson; *Animator* Per Åhlin. Eastmancolor, 113 mins. Swedish.
Aspect Ratio 1.66: 1.

Leading Players: Gösta Ekman (*Picasso*), Hans Alfredson (*Don José*), Margareta Krook
(*Doña Maria*), Lena Olin (*Dolores*), Bernard Cribbins (*Gertrude Stein*), Wilfred Brambell
(*Alice B. Toklas*), Lennart Nyman (*Henri Rousseau*), Per Oscarsson (*Apollinaire*), Elisabeth
Söderström (*Mimi*), Birgitta Andersson (*Ingrid Svensson-Guggenheim*), Magnus
Härenstam (*Hitler*), Sune Mangs (*Churchill*), Yngve Gamlin (*Djagilev*), Lisbeth Zachrisson
(*Olga*), Sven Lindberg (*Dr. Albert Schweitzer*).
DVD. AB Svensk FILMINDUSTRI 530808. Region 2.

Pirosmani (USSR, 1969, Released 1971). *Director* Georgy Shengelaya; *Production
Company* Gruzia Film Studios; *Screenplay* Georgy Shengelaya, Erlom Akhvlediani; *Editor*
M. Karalashvili; *Photography* Konstantin Apryatin; *Sound* O. Gegechkori; *Music* Vakhtang
Kukhianidze; *Art Director* Avtandil Varazi, V. Arabidze; *Costumes* G. Kurdiani; *Special
Effects* M. Gagua. Colour, 85 or 105 mins. Russian/Georgian/French.
Leading Players: Avtandil Varazi (*Nikola Pirozmanishvili*), David Abashidze, Zurab
Kapanidze, Teimuraz Beridze, Boris Tsipuria.
DVD. RUSCICO R126. Region 6.

Pollock (USA, 2000). *Director* Ed Harris; *Production Company* Pollock Film Inc, Fred Berner
Films, Zeke; *Screenplay* Barbara Turner, based on the book by Steven Naifeh; *Editor*
Kathryn Himoff; *Photography* Lisa Rinzier; *Sound* Noah Blough; *Art Director* Peter
Rogness; *Costume* David Robinson; *Music* Jeff Beal; *Jackson Pollock Paintings* Lisa Lawley.
Colour, 123 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.
Leading Players: Ed Harris (*Jackson Pollock*), Marcia Gay Harden (*Lee Krasner*), Tom Bower
(*Dan Miller*), Jennifer Connelly (*Ruth Kligman*), Bud Cort (*Howard Putzel*), John Heard
(*Tony Smith*), Val Kilmer (*William DeKooning*), Robert Knott (*Sande Pollock*), David Leary
(*Charles Pollock*), Amy Madigan (*Peggy Guggenheim*).
DVD. Sony Pictures Classics CDR32705. Region 2. Special features: Audio commentary by
Ed Harris; Deleted scenes; The Making of featurette; Interview with Ed Harris;
Filmographies; Trailer.

Pontormo, un amore eretico (Pontormo, A Heretical Love) (Italy, 2004) *Director* Giovanni
Fago; *Producer* Carlo V. Quinterio, Angro Bassi, Pietro Innocenti; *Production Company*
Palamo Film, Star Plex, Fondo di Garanzia; *Screenplay* Giovanni Fago, Massimo Felisatti,
Marilisa Caló; *Photography* Alessio Gelsini; *Editor* Giancarlo Cerciosimo; *Sound* Massimo
Loffredi, Roberto Alberghini; *Designer* Amedeo Fago; *Costumes* Lia Morandini; *Music* Pino
Donaggio. Colour, 90 mins. English/Italian.

Leading Players: Joe Mantegna (*Jacopo Carrucci, Il Pontormo*), Galatea Ranzi (*Anna Hals*), Toni Bertorelli (*Priore San Lorenzo*), Laurent Terzieff (*Inquisitor*), Giacinto Palmarini (*Battista*), Massimo Wermüller (*Bronzino*), Alberto Bognanni (*Cosimo 1*), Sandro Lombardi (*Anselmo*), Vernon Dobtcheff (*Riccio*), Andy Luotto (*Mastro Rossino*), Lea Gramsdorff (*Bronzino's wife*).

Postcards From America (UK/USA, 1994). *Director* Steve McLean; *Producer* Craig Paull, Christine Vachon; *Production Company* Channel Four Films, Islet, Normal; *Screenplay* Steve McLean, David Wojnarowicz; *Editor* Elizabeth Gazzara; *Photography* Ellen Kraus; *Sound* Tim O'Shea; *Art Direction* Scott Pask; *Design* Thérèse Deprez; *Costume* Sarah Jane Slotnick; *Music* Stephen Endelman. Colour, 87 mins. English. Aspect Ratio 1.85:1.

Leading Players: James Lyons (*Adult David*), Michael Tighe (*Teenage David*), Olmo Tighe (*Young David*), Michael Imperioli (*The Hustler*), Michael Ringer (*Father*), Maggie Lowe (*Mother*).

DVD. Strand Releasing 9502-2. Region 1.

The Quince Tree Sun (El Sol del Membrillo/ Dream of Light) (Spain, 1992). *Director* Victor Erice; *Screenplay* Victor Erice, Antonio López; *Editor* Juan Ignacio San Mateo; *Photography* Javier Aguirresarobe, Angel Luis Fernández; *Music* Pascal Gaigne. Colour, 132 mins. Spanish. Aspect Ratio 1.37: 1.

Leading Players: Antonio López, Maria Moreno, Enrique Gran, José Carrtero.

DVD. Rosebud Films. Region 0. 2 discs. Includes booklet. Disc 2 contains special features: Apuntes 1990-2003; Interview of Lopez by Erice; Portfolio.

The Rebel (UK, 1960) *Director* Robert Day; *Producer* W. A. Whittaker; *Production Company* Associated British Picture Corporation; *Screenplay* Ray Galton, Alan Simpson, Tony Hancock; *Editor* Richard Best; *Photography* Gilbert Taylor; *Sound* A. W. Lumkin; *Music* Frank Cordell; *Art Director* Robert Jones; *Paul's Paintings* Alistair Grant; *Costumes* Dora Lloyd. Technicolor, 105m. English.

Leading Players: Tony Hancock (*Anthony Hancock*), George Sanders (*Sir Charles Brewer*), Paul Massie (*Paul*), Margit Saad (*Margot Carreras*), Grégoire Aslan (*Carreras*), Dennis Price (*Jim Smith*), Irene Handl (*Mrs Cora Crevatte*), John Le Mesurier (*Office Manager*), Liz Fraser (*Waitress*).

DVD. Studio Canal/Optimum Classic, Catalogue No. OPTD0655. Region 2. 2006. A two DVD set including *The Punch and Judy Man*. Special feature: Commentary by Paul Merton, Ray Galton and Alan Simpson.

Rembrandt (UK, 1936). *Director/Producer* Alexander Korda; *Production Company* London Film Productions; *Screenplay* Carl Zuckmayer, Arthur Wimperis, Lajos Biró; *Photography* Georges Perinal; *Editor* William Hornbeck; *Sound* A. W. Watkins. B/W, 85 mins, 7913 feet. English.

Leading Players: Charles Laughton (*Rembrandt van Rijn*), Gertrude Lawrence (*Geertje Dirx*), Elsa Lanchester (*Hendrikje Stoffels*), Edward Chapman (*Fabrizius*), Roger Livesey (*Beggar Saul*), John Bryning (*Titus Rijn*).

DVD: MGM Vintage Classics (1002065). Region 1. Disc includes original theatrical trailer.

Rembrandt (Ewiger Rembrandt) (Germany, 1942). *Director* Hans Steinhoff; *Production Company* Terra-Filmkunst; *Screenplay* Hans Steinhoff, Kurt Heuser, from the novel "Zwischen Hell und Dunkel" (Between Light and Dark) by V. Tornius; *Photography* Richard Angst; *Editor* Alice Ludwig; *Sound* Walter Rühland; *Art Direction* Walter Röhrig; *Costume* Jacques Edme du Mont, Walter Schulze-Mittendorff, Friedel Towae; *Music* Alois Melichar. 99 mins., B/W, German. Aspect Ratio 1.37:1.

Leading Players: Ewald Balsler (*Rembrandt*), Hertha Feiler (*Saskia von Rijn*), Gisela Uhlen (*Hendrickje Stoffels*), Theodor Loos (*Jan Six*).

Rembrandt (France/Germany/Netherlands, 1999). *Director* Charles Matton; *Screenplay* Charles Matton, Syvie Matton; *Production Company* Argus Film Produktion; *Producer* Humbert Balsan; *Photography* Pierre Dupouey; *Editor* François Gédigier; *Design* Philippe Chiffre; *Costume* Eve-Marie Arnault; *Sound* Bernard Bats, Patrice Gisolet, Dominique Hennequin; *Music* Nicolas Matton. Colour, 103 mins. French. Aspect Ratio 1.85:1.

Leading Players: Klaus Maria Brandauer (*Rembrandt von Rijn*), Romane Bohringer (*Hendrickje Stoffels*), Jean Rochefort (*Nicolaes Tulp*), Johanna ter Steege (*Saskia Uylenburgh*), Jean-Philippe Écoffey (*Jan Six*), Caroline van Houten (*Geertje Direx*). DVD. Editions Montparnasse. Region 2. Special features: Le miroir des paradoxes, le "Palettes" sur Rembrandt; Analyse des autoportraits de l'artiste; Making-of du film; Images de Joël Lécussan; Montage de Léonard Matton.

Rembrandt fecit 1669 (Netherlands, 1977) *Director* Jos Stelling; *Production Company* Jos Stelling Filmproducties; *Screenplay* Wil Hildebrand, Jos Stelling, Chiem van Houweninge; *Photography* Ernest Bresser; *Editor* Jan Overweg; *Design* Gert Brinkers; *Music* Laurens van Rooyen. 110 mins. Colour. Dutch.

Leading Players: Frans Stelling, Gerard de Vos, Lucie Singeling, Aya Gil, Ton de Koff, Hanneke van der Velden, Ed Kolmeijer.

DVD. Afilm DS91648. Region 2.

Rembrandt's J'Accuse (Netherlands/Germany/Finland, 2008) *Director/Screenplay* Peter Greenaway; *Production Company* Submarine/ Vrijzinnig Protestantse Radio Omroep (VPRO)/ Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR)/ ARTE France/ Yleisradio (YLE); *Distributor* ContentFilm International; *Producer* Bruno Felix, Femke Wolting; *Photography* Reinier van Brummelen; *Editor* Irma De Vries, Elmer Leupen; *Music* Marco Robino, Giovanni Sollima. . Colour, 86 mins. (DVD version 100 mins.). English. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.

Leading Players: Martin Freeman (*Rembrandt van Rijn*), Eva Birthistle (*Saskia*), Jodhi May (*Geetje*), Emily Holmes (*Hendrickje*), Natalie Press (*Marieke*), Peter Greenaway (*Himself/ Public Prosecutor*).

DVD, see **Nightwatching**.

Renoir (France, 2012). *Director* Gilles Bourdos; *Production Company* Fidélité Films, Wild Bunch, Mars Distribution, France 2 Cinéma, Orange Cinéma Series, France Télévision, Région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Centre National de la Cinématographie; *Producer* Christine de Jekel; *Screenplay* Gilles Bourdos, Jérôme Tonnerre, based on works by Jacques Renoir; *Photography* Ping Bin Lee; *Editor* Tannick Kergoat; *Sound* Valérie Deloof; *Production Design* Benoît Barouh; *Costume* Pascaline Chavanne; *Music* Alexandre Desplat. Colour, 111 mins. French/Italian. Aspect ratio 1.85 : 1.

Leading Players : Michel Bouquet (*Pierre-Auguste Renoir*), Christa Theret (*Andrée Heuschling*), Vincent Rottiers (*Jean Renoir*), Thomas Doret (*Coco Renoir*), Romaine Bohringer (*Gabrielle*), Michèle Gleizer (*Aline Renoir*), Laurent Poitrenaux (*Pierre Renoir*). DVD. Region 2. Soda Pictures, 2013. SODA182.

Savage Messiah (UK, 1972) *Director and Producer* Ken Russell; *Production Company* Russ-Arts Productions, for MGM –EMI; *Screenplay* Christopher Logue, based on the book by H S Ede; *Photography* Dick Bush; *Sound Editor* Stuart Baird; *Editor* Michael Bradsell; *Production Designer* Derek Jarman; *Music* Michael Garrett; *Costumes* Shirley Russell. Metrocolor, 103 mins, 9310 ft. English. Aspect Ratio 1.78 : 1.

Leading Players: Dorothy Tutin (*Sophie Brzeska*), Scott Antony (*Henri Gaudier*), Helen Mirren (*Gosh Smith-Boyle*), Lindsay Kemp (*Angus Corky*), Michael Gough (*M. Gaudier*), John Justin (*Lionel Shaw*), Aubrey Richards (*Mayor*), Peter Vaughan (*Museum Attendant*), Ben Aris (*Thomas Buff*), Eleanor Fazan (*Mme. Gaudier*), Otto Diamant (*Mr. Saltzman*), Susanna East (*Pippa*), Maggy Maxwell (*Tart*), Imogen Claire (*Mavis Coldstream*), Judith Paris (*Kate*), Robert Lang (*Major Boyle*).

VHS VIDEOTAPE. MGM/UA M200361. NTSC.

Sei Bambine e il Perseo (Italy, 1939) *Director/Editor/Screenplay/Music* Giovacchino Forzano; *Producer* Mino Donati, Giacomo Forzano; *Screenplay* Giovacchino Forzano; *Photography* Aldo Tonti; *Sound* Raul Magni; *Art Director/Costumes* Antonio Valente. B/W, 100 mins. Italian.

Leading Players: Augusto Di Giovanni, Elena Zareschi, Manlio Mannozi, Mariù Gleck, Flori Rianetti, Tani Biancofiore.

Séraphine (France/Belgium, 2008). *Director* Martin Provost ; *Producer* Milèna Poylo, Gilles Sacuto ; *Production Company* TS Productions, France 3 Cinéma, Climax Films (Belgique), RTBF (Belgium TV); *Screenplay* Martin Provost, Marc Abdelnour; *Photography* Laurent Brunet; *Editor* Ludo Troch; *Sound* Philippe Van den Driessche; *Set Design* Thierry François; *Music* Michael Galasso. Colour, 125 mins. French/German. Aspect Ratio 1.85 : 1.

Leading Players Yolande Moreau (*Séraphine Louis*), Wilhelm Uhde (*Ulrich Tukur*), Anne Bennent (*Anne Marie Uhde*), Geneviève Mnich (*Madame Duphot*), Nico Rogner (*Helmut Kollé*), Adélaïde Leroux (*Minouche*), Serge Larivière (*Duval*), Françoise Lebrun (*Mère Supérieure*).

DVD. Metrodome MTD230. Region 2. Special features: The Story of Séraphine De Senlis; The History of Naive Art; Theatrical trailer.

State of the Artist see **Full Moon Fables**

Summer in February (UK, 2013). *Director* Christopher Menaul; *Producer* Jeremy Cowdrey, Pippa Criss, Janette Day; *Production Company* Crossday Productions Ltd, Apart Films, Marwood Pictures; *Screenplay* Jonathan Smith; *Photography* Andrew Dunn; *Editor* Chris Gill, St John O'Rourke; *Sound* Colin Chapman; *Production Design* Sophie Becher; *Art Direction* James Morrall; *Costume* Nic Ede; *Music* Benjamin Wallfisch. Colour, 100 mins. English. Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1.

Leading Players: Dominic Cooper (*A. J. Munnings*), Emily Browning (*Florence Carter-Wood*), Dan Stevens (*Gilbert Evans*), Hattie Morahan (*Laura Knight*), Mia Austin (*Dolly*),

Shaun Dingwall (*Harold Knight*), Max Deacon (*Joey Carter-Wood*), Nicholas Farrell (*Mr Carter-Wood*), Michael Maloney (*Col. Paynter*).

DVD. Region 2. Metrodome, 2013. MTD5847. Special Features: Cast interviews; Art behind the film; The music; Interviews; Shooting in Cornwall.

Surmatants (Dance Macabre/Dance of Death) (Estonia/Soviet Union, 1991). *Director* Tõnu Virve; *Production Company* Freyja Film, Telefilm Soyuz; *Screenplay* Tõnu Virve, Hans H, Freedman, Promet Torga; *Photography* Mait Mäekivi; *Editor* Marju Juhkum; *Artistic Director* Vadim Fomitsen, Maple Priit; *Music* Sumera. Colour, 125 mins. Estonian/Latin. *Leading Players*: Evald Hermaküla (*Bernt Notke*), Mikk Mikiver (*Hermen Rode*), Solen Freedman (*Schiekel Kalt*), Peter Volkonski (*Michel Sittow*), Margus Varusk (*Young Michel Sittow*), Kaie Mihkelson (*Margaret Sittow/ Isabel Catholic*), Enn Kraam (*Father Eugenio*), Kärt Tomongas (*Martia*).

Surviving Picasso (USA, 1996). *Director* James Ivory; *Production Company* [Merchant Ivory Productions](#), [David L. Wolper Productions](#) *Producer* Ismail Merchant, David L. Wolper; *Screenplay* Ruth Praver Jhabvala, from the book by Arianna Huffington; *Photographer* Tony Pierce-Roberts; *Editor* Andrew Marcus; *Sound* Robert Hein; *Production Design* Luciana Arrighi; *Art Director* Geoffrey Larcher, Andrew Sanders; *Costume* Carol Ramsey; *Music* Richard Robbins. , Technicolor, 120 mins. Aspect Ratio 1.78: 1. English. *Leading Players*: Anthony Hopkins (*Pablo Picasso*), Natascha McElhone (*Françoise Gilot*), Julianne Moore (*Dora Maar*), Joss Ackland (*Henri Matisse*), Peter Eyre (*Sabartes*), Jane Lapotaire (*Olga Picasso*), Joseph Maher (*Kahnweiler*), Bob Peck (*Françoise's Father*), Diane Venora (*Jacqueline*), Joan Plowright (*Françoise's Grandmother*), Dominic West (*Paulo Picasso*).

DVD. 2006. Warner Home Video Germany Z5 1448395. Region 2.

Theophilos (Greece, 1987). *Director/Producer/Screenwriter* Lakis Papastathis; *Production Company* Greekfilm Center, Hellenic Radio and Television (ERT); *Photography* Thodros Margas; *Sound* Giannis Iliopoulos, Dinos Kittou; *Editor* Vangelis Gousias; *Costume* Ioulia Stavridou; *Music* Giogios Papadakis. Colour, 115 mins. Greek. *Leading Players*: Dimitris Katalifos (*Theofilos Hatzimihail*).

L'Ultima Cena (The Last Supper) (Italy/USA, 1948). *Director/Editor* Luigi Maria Giachino; *Production Company* I.C.E.T. (Industrie Cinematografiche e Teatrali), Artisti Associati; *Producer* Ferruccio Carmelli, Giorgio Venturini; *Screenplay* Giorgio Venturini, Luigi Maria Giachino, Leo Benvenuti, Paola Ojetti; *Photography* Arturo Gallea; *Designer* Ernesto Nelli, Mario Grazzini; *Costume* Maria De Matteis; *Music* Mario Nascimbene, B/W, 86 mins. Italian. Aspect Ratio 1.37: 1.

Leading Players: Bruno Barnabè, Kathleen Rooney, David Peel, Carlo Righini, Jasmine Dee, Giuliana Rivera, Gino Del Signore, Domenico Viglione Borghese.

Das unsterbliche Antlitz (The Immortal Face) (Austria, 1947).

Director/Screenplay/Producer Géza von Cziffra; *Production Company* Cziffra – Film; *Photography* Ludwig Berger; *Editor* Arnfried Heyne; *Sound* Otto Untersalmberger; *Art Design* Fritz Jüptner-Jonstorff; *Costume* Gerdago; *Music* Alois Melichar. B/W, 100mins German. Aspect Ratio 1.37: 1.

Leading Players: O. W. Fischer (*Anselm Feuerbach*), Marianne Schönauer (*Nana Ris*), Helen Thimig (*Henriette Feuerbach*), Siegfried Breuer (*Fürst Catti*), Attila Hörbiger (*Julius Allgeyer*), Dagny Servaes (*Mother Ris*), Heinrich Ortmyer (*Giuseppe Ris*), Fritz Gehlen (*Tonio Ris*).

Utamaro and His Five Women (Utamaro oh megura gonin no onna) (Japan, 1946). *Director* Kenji Mizoguchi; *Production Company* Shôckiku Film Ltd; *Screenplay* Yoshikata Yoda, based on the novel by Kanji Kunieda; *Photography* Minoru Miki; *Editor* Shintarô Miyamoto; *Music* Tamezô Mochizuki, Hisato Osawa. B/W, 106 mins. Japanese. Aspect Ratio 1.37:1.

Leading Players: Minosuke Bandô (*Utamaro*), Kinuyo Tanaka (*Okita*); Kôtarô Bandô (*Seinosake*), Eiko Ohara (*Yukie*), Hiroko Kawasaki (*Oran*), Toshiko Iizuka (*Takasode*),

Van Gogh (France, 1991). *Director/Screenplay* Maurice Pialat; *Production Company* Erato Films, StudioCanal, Films A2, Les Films du Livradois, investimage 2, Investimage 3, Coimage 2, Sofiarp, Centr National de la Cinématographie (CNC), Club des Investissements, Canal+; *Photography* Emmanuel Machuel, Gilles Henry, Jacques Loiseleux; *Editor* Yann Dedet, Nathalie Hubert, Héléne Viard; *Sound* Jean-Pierre Duret; *Production Design* Philippe Pallut, Katia Vischkof; *Costume* Edith Vesperini, *Music* André Bernot, Jean-Marc Bouget, Jacques Dutronc. Colour, 158 mins. French. Aspect Ratio 1.66: 1.

Leading Players: Jacques Dutronc (*Vincent Van Gogh*), Alexandra London (*Marguerite Gachet*), Bernard Le Coq (*Théo Van Gogh*), Gérard Sétty (*Gachet*), Corinne Bourdon (*Jo*), Elsa Zylberstein (*Cathy*).

DVD. Region 2. Artificial Eye ARTO40DVD, 2 discs. Special features: Deleted scenes; Interview with Jacques Dutronc; Gallery of Maurice Pialat's paintings; Biographies of Maurice Pialat and Jacques Dutronc; Theatrical trailer.

BLU-RAY, Region B. Eureka, Masters Of Cinema No. 67. Special features: A short essay film about the painter by Maurice Pialat; A 10 minute video interview with Pialat from 1991; A 50 minute video interview with Pialat from 1992; Video interviews with Jacques Dutronc, Bernard Le Coq, Emmanuel Machuet, and Yann Dedet; Deleted scenes; Theatrical trailer; 32 page booklet containing a new essay on the film by Sabrina Marques; Jean-Luc Godard's tribute letter to Pialat about the film; Pialat's writings; Pialat's canvases; Rare archival images.

Vincent and Me (Vincent et moi). (Canada/France, 1990). *Director/Screenplay* Michael Rubbo; *Producer* Rock Demers, Claude Nedjar; *Production Company* BML Productions/ Les Productions La Fête Inc./ Radio Canada Productions/ Société Générale des Industries Culturelles du Quebec (SOGIC)/ Super Écran/ Téléfilm Canada; *Distributor* Claire Films; *Photography* Andreas Poulsson; *Editor* André Corriveau; *Sound* Yvon Benoît; *Design* Anne Galéa, Suzanne Labrecque; *Art Director* Violette Danleau; *Costume* Huguette Gagné; *Music* Pierick Houdy. Eastmancolor, 100 mins. English/French.

Leading Players: Tchéry Karyo (*Vincent Van Gogh*), Nina Petronzio (*Jo*), Christopher Forrest (*Felix Murphy*), Paul Klerk (*Joris*), Vernon Dobtcheff (*Dr Winkler*).

DVD. Productions Lafête 40471. Region 1. Bonus features : Still gallery.

Vincent and Theo (France/Great Britain/Netherlands/Italy, 1990) *Director* Robert Altman; *Producer* David Conroy; *Production Company* Belbo Films, Central Films, La Sept, Telepool,

Raiuno, VARA, Valor, Aréna Films (Paris), Centre National de la Cinématographie; *Screenplay* Julian Mitchell; *Photography* Jean Lépin; *Editor* Françoise Coispeau; *Sound* Philippe Combes; *Designer* Stephen Altman; *Costume* Scott Bushnell; *Music* Gabriel Yared. Eastmancolor, 140 mins., 12,560 feet. English. Aspect Ratio 1.85: 1.

Leading Players: Tim Roth (*Vincent Van Gogh*), Paul Rhys (*Theo Van Gogh*), Johanna Ter Steege (*Jo Bonger*), Wladimir Yordanoff (*Paul Gauguin*), Jip Wijngaarden (*Sien Hoornik*), Anne Canovas (*Marie*), Hans Kesting (*Andries Bonger*), Peter Tuinman (*Anton Mauve*), Jean-Pierre Cassel (*Dr Paul Gachet*).

DVD. Carlton 3037090373. Region 2. Special features: Trailer.

The Wolf at the Door (Oviri) (France/Denmark, 1986). *Director/Producer* Henning Carlsen; *Production Company* Caméras Continentales, Dagmar Film Production, Danmarks Radio (DR); *Screenplay* Christopher Hampton, from a story by Henning Carlsen and Jean-Claude Carrière; *Photography* Mikael Salomon; *Editor* Janus Billeskov Jansen; *Sound* René Levert; *Art Direction* André Guérin, Karl-Otto Hedal; *Costume* Charlotte Clasin; *Music* Ole Schmidt, Roger Bourland (US Version). Eastmancolor, 86 mins. French/English/Danish.

Leading Players: Donald Sutherland (*Paul Gauguin*), Valerie Morea (*Annah-la-Javanaise*), Max von Sydow (*August Strindberg*), Sofie Gråbøl (*Judith Molard*), Merete Voldstedlund (*Mette Gauguin*), Jørgen Reenberg (*Edward Brandes*), Yves Barsack (*Edgar Degas*).

VHS Video. RCA/Columbia (CVT11225).

Yumeji (Japan, 1991) *Director* Seijun Suzuki; *Producer* Genjiro Arato; *Production Company* Genjiro Arato Pictures; *Screenplay* Yôzô Tanaka; *Photography* Junichi Fujisawa; *Editor* Akira Suzuki; *Sound* Fumio Hashimoto; *Design* Noriyoshi Ikeya; *Music* Shigeru Umebayashi. Colour. 128 mins. Japanese. Aspect Ratio 1.66:1.

Leading Players: Kenji Sawada (*Yumeji Tokehisha*), Tomoko Mariya (*Tomoyo Wakiya*), Masumi Miyazaki (*Onshu Inamura*), Tamasaburo Bando (*Onshu Inamura*).

DVD. Kimstim KS2036. Region 1. Special features: Suzuki Bio/Filmography; Original theatrical trailer; Original key art/press images; Print essay on Suzuki and the Taisho Trilogy.

Zille und ick (Zille and Me) (East Germany, 1983). *Director* Werner W. Wallroth; *Producer* Hans-Erich Busch; *Production Company* Deutsche Film (DEFA); *Screenplay* Werner W. Wallroth, Dieter Wardetzsy; *Photography* Wolfgang Braumann; *Sound* Edgar Nietzsche; *Editor* Thea Richter; *Design* Erich Krüllke; *Costume* Barbara Braumann; *Music* Peter Rabenalt. Colour, 117 mins. German.

Leading Players: Kurt Nolze (*Heinrich Zille*), Daniela Hoffmann (*Henriette 'Jette' Kramer*), Thomas Zieler (*Ede Schmidt*), Doris Abeßer (*Luise Kramer*), Erik S. Klein (*F. W. König*).

DVD. Icestorm. 2008. Region 0. (Jokers edition).