

EDITORS' CHOICE

Recommendations from the *Sight and Sound* team



FLATPACK FESTIVAL

flatpackfestival.org.uk, 10-19 May, venues across Birmingham

I'm always intrigued to see what Flatpack, which is committed to showing film in all shapes and sizes, has assembled for its annual festival. Think crafty cross-cultural invention with no manual rather than factory readymades. Alongside cine-inspired sound and art events, this year's slate includes a programme of classic Ukrainian animated shorts scored by experimental band Potreba Group; an audiovisual 'entertainment spa', which aims to "stimulate the brain by projecting patterns and colours directly into your eyeballs"; and 'regular' screenings of such gems as a 4K restoration of Bridgett M. Davis's 1996 comedy *Naked Acts* (pictured above), about a Black woman's challenging experiences on a low-budget indie shoot.

Isabel Stevens, managing editor



SNAPSHOT

Twelve-month season running from May tapecollective.co.uk

Grassroots UK distributor Tape Collective is running a season focusing on 'snapshots' of Black girlhood, such as Ayoka Chenzira's 1994 Brooklyn-based *Bildungsroman Alma's Rainbow* (1993), and *Milisuthando* (2023), Milisuthando Bongela's documentary-memoir about her childhood in apartheid South Africa. A highlight is the 10 May rerelease of *Drylongo* (1998, pictured above), the only feature film by artist Cauleen Smith. Lo-fi and scrapbooky, it mirrors the artistic searching of protagonist Pica, a young Oakland woman who takes Polaroids of Black men as "evidence of existence" while the threat of a "Westside slasher" looms. It pulses with saturated colours and 1990s hip-hop needle drops that set the warm tone for Smith's ambitious genre-blend.

Katie McCabe, reviews editor



PETER STRICKLAND: A CURZON COLLECTION

Available to pre-order, £69.99

A decade since *The Duke of Burgundy* (pictured above) and the appetite for Strickland's rich sensory cinema, steeped in filmic references and high-concept horror, only increases. This lavish Blu-ray box-set will do nicely to tide us over until his next project. Across six discs, it comprises his five features, beginning with *Katalin Varga* (2009), plus seven further hours of extras, including commentaries, interviews, deleted scenes and, most delectably, a collection of his short films and music videos, some newly restored, some previously unseen – all painstakingly sourced by the director via "old negatives or hard drives that were left in a friend's ex-spouse's apartment or in a lock-up garage after one of my colleagues fell in love with someone thousands of miles away". When you're not gorging yourself on the films, admire the essays by the filmmaker himself, *Sight and Sound* contributor Anton Bitel and Romanian actress Fatma Mohamed, who appears in every one of the films. All this and an enamel pin, so you'll know a fellow Stricklandite when you pass on the street.

Pamela Hutchinson, *Weekly Film Bulletin* editor



INCLINATIONS FILM CLUB

CCA Glasgow, [@inclinations_film_club](https://www.instagram.com/inclinations_film_club)

Set up by Glasgow-based writer and filmmaker Rastko Novaković, the Inclinations Film Club, held at the CCA's cinema in the centre of the city, has been running for little more than a year but is already a beacon of exploratory, politically inflected programming, with post-screening discussions a key element. Recent highlights include Alain Cavalier's lacerating *Libera Me* (1993), inspiringly paired with James Kelman reading a selection of his own stories on film before joining a talk about Cavalier's film in person; a three-film tribute to Jean-Marie Straub and Jean-Luc Godard; Nürşen Bakir's rousing *Those Roads of Fatsa* (2021); and John Gianvito's *Her Socialist Smile* (2020), to name a few. There's a Scottish premiere of Angelo Madsen Minax's profoundly affecting family portrait *North by Current* (2021, pictured above) on 21 May; and on 11 June two exquisite films by Nina Danino, *Solitude* (2022) and *Maria* (2023), which focus, respectively, on Nico and Maria Callas. Inclinations is a model for what can be done on a shoestring budget in straitened times.

Kieron Corless, associate editor



GASOLINE RAINBOW

Streaming on Mubi from 31 May

Brothers Turner Ross and Bill Ross IV follow 2020's *Bloody Nose*, *Empty Pockets* with a whirlwind road trip through Oregon, shot in their trademark docufiction style, where the narrative is planned but the dialogue is entirely improvised. As a five-strong gang of teenagers take to the road in a minivan – their chimeric coastal destination is a "party at the end of the world" – we get to know them intimately, including their musical tastes, which makes for an energisingly eclectic soundtrack. Most impressive is the cinematography (by the Ross brothers themselves), which is nimble enough to follow the teens in their wildest moments but finds oases of calm during the comedowns.

Thomas Flew, editorial assistant



THE PLOT THICKENS

SERIES 5: DECODING JOHN FORD

Available from 6 June

I wouldn't ordinarily recommend a podcast I haven't listened to, but the consistent brilliance of the previous four series of TCM's *The Plot Thickens* lets me stick my neck out. Ben Mankiewicz returns, having hosted deep dives into Peter Bogdanovich, *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (1990), Lucille Ball and Pam Grier, promising: "It hasn't been easy getting to the bottom of John Ford, but as you'll hear, it was worth the trip." Ford was a famously difficult man and visionary filmmaker, winning more Oscars than any other director while cultivating a reputation as a domineering drunk. The never-before-heard interviews with John Wayne, Katharine Hepburn, Henry Fonda, James Stewart and Ford himself are sure to be fascinating.

Mike Williams, editor-in-chief