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SFMOMA PRESENTS RETROSPECTIVE OF WERNER HERZOG FILMS

From November 2006 through January 2007, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) will present a retrospective of films by Werner Herzog, one of the most important filmmakers working today. The series commences Thursday, November 9, with a screening of *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972) and concludes with his most recently completed film, *Grizzly Man* (2005), on Saturday, January 20. Thirteen films will be screened in total; the full schedule is listed below.



Werner Herzog, *Fitzcarraldo* (still), 1982; photo: courtesy Werner Herzog Film

Heralded as the “romantic visionary” of the 1970s New German cinema, Herzog boasts an extensive oeuvre that focuses predominantly on themes of mysticism and postwar Germany. These interests echo those of his contemporary and countryman Anselm Kiefer—whose work will be on view in the Museum’s fourth-floor galleries from October 20, 2006, through January 21, 2007—and establish a distinct artistic link between the two.

Herzog has produced, written, and directed more than 40 films, published over a dozen books, and directed more than a dozen operas. His work has been praised by critics, earning the filmmaker numerous awards, including Best Director at both the Cannes and Sundance film festivals and the 2006 Film Society Directing Award at the San Francisco International Film Festival.

The SFMOMA retrospective will include examples from the full range of Herzog’s work, from fictional features to documentaries and shorts. The lineup will begin with six films in November and December, continuing with seven films in January.

Werner Herzog Retrospective

November 9–January 20

All screenings take place in the Phyllis Wattis Theater.

Aguirre, the Wrath of God

1972, 93 min.

Thursday, November 9 / 6:30 p.m.

An ill-fated 1560 expedition into the Peruvian jungle provides the narrative genesis for Herzog’s groundbreaking *Aguirre*, which imagines a grueling trek along the Amazon River by conquistadors hungry for gold. Madness sets in as the party ventures deeper into the wilds—battling hunger, exhaustion, and attacks by natives—and the

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expedition's fate falls under the increasingly ruthless leadership of the title character (Klaus Kinski). *Aguirre* is introduced by SFMOMA curator Dominic Willsdon and followed by a discussion of the film and Herzog's work in general. Speakers include San Francisco Film Society Executive Director Graham Leggat, who awarded Herzog the 2006 SFFS Directing Award; Tom Luddy, Telluride Film Festival co-director; and Johannes Fricke-Waldthausen, the Los Angeles-based curator who was the first to screen *Aguirre* in the United States.

Signs of Life and Early Shorts by Werner Herzog

Last Words (1968, 13 min.)

Precautions Against Fanatics (1969, 12 min.)

Signs of Life (1968, 90 min.)

Saturday, November 11 / 2 p.m.

Two rarely seen early shorts provide the context for Herzog's acclaimed first major feature film, *Signs of Life*. Set during the Nazi occupation of Greece, *Signs of Life* is a strange and affecting reflection on the absurdity of war. A German soldier goes mad, locks himself in a fortress, and shoots fireworks at the town square, killing a donkey.

Stroszek

1977, 107 min.

Saturday, November 18 / 3 p.m.

In one of Herzog's most moving films Bruno Stroszek is a remote and fragile street musician who flees ordinary persecution in Berlin for a new but unimproved life in the American Midwest. The scene featuring crazed, dancing chickens at a Wisconsin tourist trap is among the most famous endings in cinema.

Fitzcarraldo

1982, 157 min.

Saturday, December 2 / 3 p.m.

Klaus Kinski stars (alongside Claudia Cardinale) as Brian Sweeney Fitzgerald, an opera-loving entrepreneur who sets out to make his fortune in the rubber business and build an opera house in the Peruvian jungle. The film notoriously involves transporting a 340-ton steamship over a mountain—an incredible feat that enticed Les Blank to make a behind-the-scenes documentary on the film, *The Burden of Dreams*.

Little Dieter Needs to Fly

1997, 80 min.

Thursday, January 18 / 6:30 p.m.

The subject of this documentary is Dieter Dengler, a German American pilot for the U.S. Navy and Bay Area resident who dramatically escaped from imprisonment during the Vietnam War. Dengler's story is also the subject of Herzog's next narrative feature, *Rescue Dawn*.

Grizzly Man

2005, 100 min.

Saturday, January 20 / 3 p.m.

Herzog's much-discussed recent feature tells the strange and disturbing story of Timothy Treadwell, an environmentalist who spent several summers in Alaska's Katmai National Park living with grizzly bears and who died in a gruesome bear attack. Herzog edits and narrates video footage shot by Treadwell and supplements it with interviews filmed after Treadwell's death.

Nosferatu Double Feature

Thursday, January 25

Nosferatu (By Werner Herzog, 1978, 103 min.) / 6:30 p.m.

Nosferatu (By F. W. Murnau, 1922, 94 min.) / 8:45 p.m.

Klaus Kinski stars as Count Dracula (with Isabelle Adjani and Bruno Ganz) in Herzog's re-make of Murnau's silent classic. Herzog has called Murnau's *Nosferatu* "the greatest of all German films," noting that he made his own version in order to find his roots as a filmmaker. Herzog's *Nosferatu* precedes a screening of the silent original, which features a live musical interpretation by local favorites Tarentel.

Three Herzog Documentaries

Saturday, January 27

The Great Ecstasy of the Woodcarver Steiner (1974, 45 min.) / 2 p.m.

Lessons of Darkness (1992, 55 min.) / 2:45 p.m.

Bells from the Deep (1993, 60 min.) / 4 p.m.

These three films expand our ideas of what a documentary can be. The first is a profound and achingly beautiful account of world champion ski-jumper Walter Steiner's almost spiritual desire for flight. The second offers an astonishing, otherworldly vision of the oil fires in Kuwait after the 1990 Gulf War. The third presents a lyrical investigation of Russian mysticism.

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Museum hours: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:45 p.m. Summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day): Open at 10 a.m. Closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas.

Koret Visitor Education Center: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:30 p.m. Summer hours: Open at 10 a.m.

Admission prices: Adults \$12.50; seniors \$8; students \$7. SFMOMA members and children 12 and under are admitted free. Thursday evenings after 6 p.m. admission is half-price. The first Tuesday of each month admission is free.

SFMOMA is easily accessible by Muni, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans, and Caltrain. Hourly, daily, and monthly parking is available at the SFMOMA Garage at 147 Minna Street. For parking information, call 415.348.0971.

Visit our Web site at www.sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art is supported by a broad array of contributors who are committed to helping advance its mission as a dynamic center for modern and contemporary art. Major annual support is provided by the Koret Foundation Funds, Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund, and Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund. KidstART free admission for children 12 and under is made possible by Charles Schwab & Co. Inc. Thursday evening half-price admission is sponsored by Banana Republic.

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