

Editors' Note

John Carpenter's 2005 film *Cigarette Burns* follows an American film buff commissioned by a wealthy collector to track down the most extreme film ever made, *La fin absolue du monde*, which on its opening night threw the audience into a murderous rage that left the theatre aisles slick with blood. Our cover image recalls the moment shortly after the collector obtains and views the coveted film: driven to an ecstatic madness by what he has witnessed, and inspired to make a film of his own, he cuts his belly with a straight razor and feeds his intestines into the film projector.

The repeated assertion that *La fin absolue du monde* "gets inside you" is reminiscent of much of the discourse surrounding a group of recent European films that feature graphic depictions of sex and violence. According to Tanya Horeck and Tina Kendall, whose preface lays the theoretical groundwork for our issue, visceral affect and a self-reflexive appeal to the spectator characterize European new extremism, which includes films as diverse as Lars von Trier's *Antichrist*, Gaspar Noé's *Irreversible*, Yorgos Lanthimos's *Dogtooth*, and Claire Denis's *Trouble Every Day*. This issue of *Cinephile* seeks to expand the discourse, calling into question the status and significance of extreme cinema across the globe. Is new extremism a phenomenon specific to Europe, or can we find its correlatives in other national cinemas? How fruitful is it to compare films from different cultural contexts based solely on their shared penchant for transgression? And finally, is extremism really "new," or is it merely a contemporary incarnation of old provocations? These questions lie at the heart of our issue. By using the phrase "contemporary extremism" in our title, rather than simply extremism or new extremism, we wish to encourage an approach that acknowledges the potential for extremist cinema beyond a particular time or culture.

Horeck and Kendall's aforementioned preface opens the issue by suggesting the implications of opening the concept of new extremism to include different national contexts, approaches, and styles. Next, Tim Palmer's contribution reconfigures recent discourse about transgressive French cinema, arguing that the extremity in Jean-Paul Civeyrac's *Des filles en noir* resides in its conceptual nihilism rather than in any explicit sex or violence. Kiva Reardon's argument that Alexandre Bustillo and Julien Maury's *À l'intérieur* pushes the limits of the material subject is mirrored in the format of her paper, which is structured to mimic the invaginated

subject that she theorizes. Considering a broader tradition of catharsis and entertainment through violence, Andrea Butler then traces the influence of Grand Guignol Theatre on contemporary extremism. Following that, Timothy Nicodemo takes a haptic approach to cinema, using the example of cinematography in *Irreversible* to argue that aesthetic techniques can be used to affect the spectator on a visceral level. Pointing out the unusual lack of gore in the German zombie film *Rammbock*, Peter Schuck then argues that the film shifts the focus from the extreme gore conventional to the genre towards a kind of extremity in film form. In the piece concluding the articles section of our issue, Dave Alexander encourages a historically sensitive understanding of Québécois extreme cinema, arguing that Daniel Grou's *7 Days* is a visceral response to the horrors of the Quiet Revolution. Finally, the issue concludes with our coverage of extremist cinema at this year's Vancouver International Film Festival.

This issue would not have been possible without the hard work of an amazing group of people. To our editorial board, thank you for your invaluable insights and suggestions. We would also like to express our gratitude to those who submitted articles, as well as to our faculty advisor, Lisa Coulthard, and UBC's Department of Theatre and Film. Special thanks go out to our talented (and very patient) designer, Shaun Inouye, and our incredible artist, Matthew Wise: without them this issue would look as though we threw it together using chainsaws, fingerpaint, and a few awkwardly placed staples.

From the early erotic pictures of the silent era, to the Surrealist movement that emerged in the twenties, to the exploitation and splatter pictures of the seventies and eighties, to the forms of extreme cinema that have emerged globally over the past decade, cinema has always used sex and violence to shock and titillate audiences. Like the film collector feeding his guts into the projector, we are compelled to experience film viscerally; if nothing else, extreme cinema gives us the opportunity to do so. We hope you enjoy our issue, you demented perverts.

- Chelsea Birks & Dana Keller

Contributors

Dave Alexander is the Editor-in-Chief of Toronto-based, horror-themed magazine *Rue Morgue*. He holds a degree in Film and Media Studies from the University of Alberta, is a film programmer, award-winning filmmaker, published fiction writer, and the curator of an art show titled *If They Came From Within: An Alternative History of Canadian Horror*.

Andrea Butler is an MA candidate in Cinema and Media Studies at York University in Toronto. She is currently working on the relationship between horror film posters of the seventies and eighties and the new resurgence of contemporary artists who are reimagining familiar cult classics. Other research interests include the representation of technology in film, theories of spectatorship and affect, documentary aesthetics, and sound in film.

Tanya Horeck is Senior Lecturer in Film Studies at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge. She has published widely on the topic of violence and cinema, and is author of the book *Public Rape: Representing Violation in Fiction and Film* (Routledge 2004) and co-editor (with Tina Kendall) of *The New Extremism in Cinema: From France to Europe* (Edinburgh UP 2011) and (with Berit Åström and Katarina Gregersdotter) *Rape in Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy and Beyond: Contemporary Scandinavian and Anglophone Crime Fiction* (Palgrave MacMillan 2012).

Tina Kendall is Senior Lecturer in Film Studies at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge. She is editor of a special issue of *Film-Philosophy* on disgust (15.2 2011) and co-editor (with Tanya Horeck) of *The New Extremism in Cinema: From France to Europe*. She is currently researching the aesthetics of boredom in contemporary cinema.

Timothy Nicodemo is an MA candidate in Film Studies at Western University. His research interests include: theories of affect, spectatorship, and authorship; film aesthetics; the onscreen representations of violence and sex; transgressive cinema; and contemporary French cinema. The combination of scientific inquiry and film theory is an academic approach he aims to carry out further in future research.

Tim Palmer is the author of *Brutal Intimacy: Analyzing Contemporary French Cinema* (Wesleyan UP 2011) and co-editor of *Directory of World Cinema: France* (Intellect/Chicago UP 2012). He is Associate Professor of Film Studies at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, and his work has appeared in many journals including *Cinema Journal*, *Journal of Film and Video*, *Studies in French Cinema*, *The French Review*, and *Film International*. He is currently completing a monograph on the film *Irreversible* for Palgrave Macmillan's *Controversies* series.

Kiva Reardon received her BA in Cultural Studies from McGill University, and then went on to complete her MA in Cinema Studies at the University of Toronto. In both degrees she focused on issues of national cinema (particularly Israeli and Canadian) and trauma studies. Working as a film writer based in Toronto, her work has appeared in *Cinema Scope*, *Reverse Shot*, and others.

Peter Schuck is a PhD student at the University of Erfurt/Germany. He studied Comparative Literature and Philosophy at the University of Erfurt and the Ruhr-University-Bochum/Germany, and wrote his MA thesis on *Discourse of the Sublime*. Currently he is writing a PhD thesis on *Zombies and the Media of the Posthuman* and is a member of the Erfurt graduate forum "Texte.Zeichen.Medien."

Matthew Wise's work is inspired by the room of empty boxes his stepfather insisted on cultivating during his youth. Sometimes he is also inspired by tough men, but not in any functional way. He spends most of his time in bed, coveting his neighbour's cat.