

Alexander Kluge

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Present Impressions,
Past Wishes and
Future Fulfillment

'Alexander Kluge. Raw Materials: Present Impressions,
Past Wishes and Future Fulfillment'

Opening reception: 9 April 2014

Exhibition dates: 10 April–22 June 2014

Opening hours: Thursdays and Fridays from 3–7pm;

Saturdays and Sundays from 12–7pm (closed on 20 April)

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'Alexander Kluge. Raw Materials: Present Impressions, Past Wishes and Future Fulfillment' presents a selection of the filmmaker's eclectic collection of 'raw materials', a series of television programmes assembling photographs, drawings, diagrams and diverse footage construed to 'strengthen the muscles of [our] power of imagination'. Alexander Kluge, a central figure of the German cultural landscape – as a filmmaker, writer and television producer – has been tackling for the past fifty years with the capacity of fantasy to organise individual experience otherwise concealed by structures of consciousness and the screens capturing our attention.

10 April–22 June 2014

www.dctp.tv

5.	SCREEN I
11.	SCREEN II
21.	SCREEN III
25.	SCREEN IV
31.	STORIES



THE STRANDED DINOSAUR

War and evolution form two radically opposite poles. Both lay claim to fatherhood in the history of mankind, although their principles are completely contrary. Yet the only hope that we humans will not destroy ourselves through warfare lays hidden in the eons of time that we have come from. In the long history of evolution, there are dormant powers known to us which tirelessly work against the principle of destruction that surfaces in times of war.

War is therefore characterised by the fact that it breaks down all barriers. In his book *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz describes how war dreams of its own 'omnipotence'. In truth though it does not have this quality, according to Clausewitz, because all of the probabilities of real life are part of war, which interferes with its omnipotence. In the end these probabilities exhaust war's power, but this is just as unlikely as a peace treaty the end of war.

People have been living with this uncanny companion for thousands of years. Those of us who do not occupy ourselves with war end up being caught off guard and squelched by it.

AUGUST 1914

HOW THE DECLARATION
OF WAR TELEGRAM WAS
DELIVERED IN PARIS

(15min., 2000)

The telegram containing the declaration of war by the German Reich arrived in Paris in a garbled state; it sounded almost like a Dada text. No one was able to decipher this encrypted message. The fact that it was nevertheless understood as the beginning of hostilities is one of the mysteries pertaining to the catastrophe of 1914.

A story by Ernst Jünger about a player piano that keeps on playing amidst the carnage, and a piece of information about the beginning of gas warfare.



Stills from *August 1914*

WHAT IS WAR?

OSKAR NEGT ON CONSTANTS AND CHANGES TO WAR IN THE 21ST CENTURY

(24min., 2002)

What did Clausewitz understand by the term 'war'? What does the President of the USA mean when he speaks of the change in warfare in the 21st century? What does one know about the history of wars? For which wars was the peace treaty a total failure despite all the victories?

Oskar Negt speaks about recent linguistic confusion surrounding the term 'war'.

NEW YORK GROUND ZERO

"OPEN WOUNDS
HEAL SLOWLY"

(2min., 2002)

Pictures of twilight in the
excavation pit over which the
Twin Towers formerly rose.

Accompanied by music by
the New York composer
Glenn Branca.



Stills from *New York
Ground Zero*



SCREEN II



THE SAHARA TURNED
INTO A SWAMP

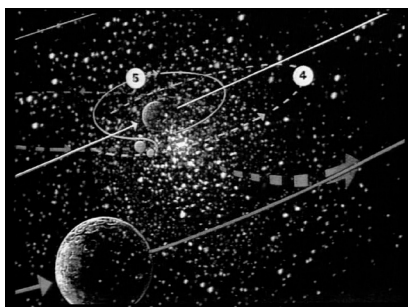
SHRINKING AND
EXPLODING TIME,
DATES FROM
EARLY AGES

(15min., 2000)

A techno magazine.

The subject is the rapid development starting at the beginning of the universe up until the era of the Gauls. Halfway through this evolutionary period the Sahara became a swamp. Formerly a sea area, it was later a desert. The period in which earth's evolution takes place has a powerful explosive force. Time is a material form of force. It shrinks in our memory.

**DIE SAHARA
WURDE
SUMPFGEBIET /**
ZEITschrumpfung,
ZeitSPRENGUNG,
Daten aus früher Zeit



Stills from *The Sahara
Turned into a Swamp*

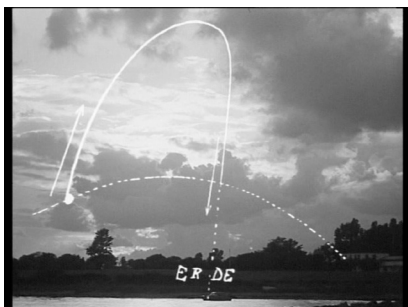
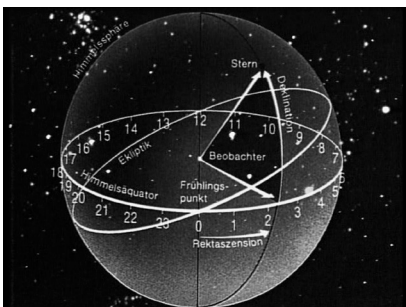
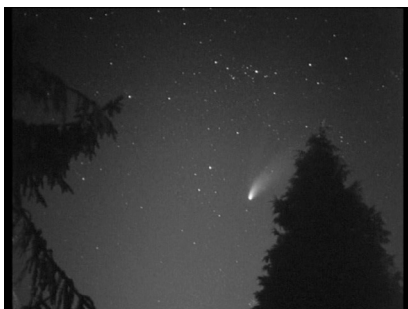
"TIME AND PLACE
WITHOUT REASON IS
VIOLENCE"

CRYPTIC QUOTES
FROM ARISTOTELES
TO HEIDEGGER

(6min., 1998)

Many of the words by the philosophers of antiquity seem enigmatic. It is similarly so for Hölderlin's texts that were written during the last year of his life under the penname Scardanelli. These mysterious texts are frequently quite beautiful, meaning that they put our thoughts into motion without leading us to an understanding.

The following principle holds true: beware of understanding too rapidly.



Stills from *Time and Place
without Reason is Violence*

THE GENTLE GUISE
OF LIGHT

EIGHT MINUTE-FILM
FEATURES IN 65MM
FORMAT

FOR THE MOSTRA
IN VENICE

(13min., 2007)

Reading News with Music
(1min.)

The Gentle Guise of Light
(2min.)

Toplight, Backlight, Keylight
(1min.)

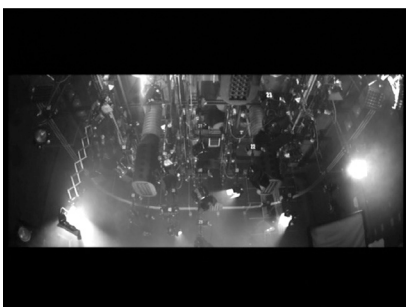
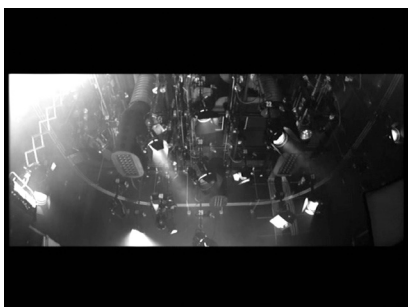
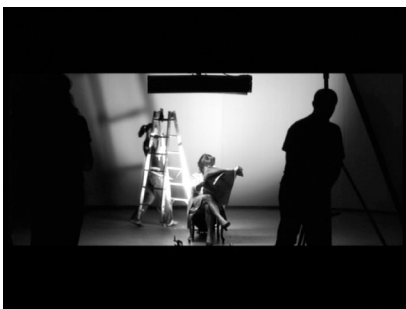
First Time
(1min.)

The Star with a Cold
(2min., 20sec.)

The Living Monument
(36sec.)

Computer & Candle Light
(1min., 30sec.)

*At Night the Studio Lights
Dream of Their Real Lives*
(3min.)



Stills from *The Gentle Guise of Light*

MULTIPLE PICTURES
FOR 5 PROJECTORS
("SIMULTANE")

INFINITE LOOP

INSTALLATION AT HAUS
DER KUNST, MUNICH

(23min, 2007)

Chicago Flux Trax

Miss Billot's Records

'Il Mare', Ships, Death

*The Bismarck on the Bottom
of the Sea*

*The End of the German
Reign over the Crimea*

*The Battle at the Edge of the Ego /
Hand-Drawn Sketches by Sigmund
Freud with Slides by Hans Richter*

Russian Parade

Diana, Opera, Acid Trax

*Ampex Digitag Optics From 1987
To 1992*

*Parole In Libertà (Words in
Freedom)*


*"The Emperor Wants To Live
Forever". A Somewhat Readable
Text from 'The Power of Emotions'*

Weather

August Everding in Chicago

Cleaning Weapons

*For Richard Leacock, with
Hans Richter*



Miss Billot won the European Typewriter Typing Competition at the time of the 1929 stock market crash. Her diligence is the expression of a whole industrial age.

The sinking of the Bismarck (with Japanese writing): some of the crew survived in an air bubble on the sea floor till New Year's Eve.

Hand-drawn sketches by Sigmund Freud (on slides by Hans Richter): The frontiers of the Ego, the libido and the primeval world. "The battle at the frontier of the Ego", etc.

Classic innovation in film was the cut. This is the dominion of a filmmaker. The cut expresses that the picture could also look quite different. Herein lies the cognitive interest in the film medium.



SCREEN III



THE EIFFEL TOWER,
KING KONG AND
THE WHITE LADY

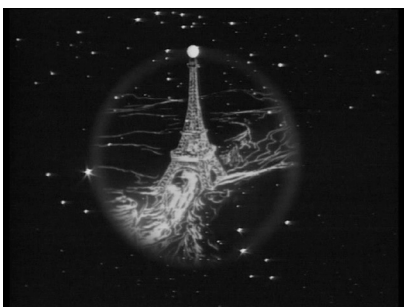
(24min., 1998)

A magazine about music films:
11 pieces, mostly waltzes.

Happy and astounded, French soldiers march through the Paris night at the end of 1918. A nightmare has come to an end. They have decorated their tanks and guns with fairy lights. This is the end of the First World War.

Short before the outbreak of the Second World War, a comic is published in Paris: THE EIFFEL TOWER HAS BEEN STOLEN. It now stands astride the Grand Canyon in the USA. The tower is brought back to Paris by a giant who is trained to protect a dainty lady (much like King Kong and the white lady, or Max Schmeling and the actress Anny Ondra). The comic comes in response to public fears that the horrors of the First World War will repeat themselves. The Maginot Line that cost so many millions and is supposed to protect France from Germany is useless. Comic relief is the only consolation to be had.

Der Eiffelturm,
King Kong
und die
weisse Frau - -



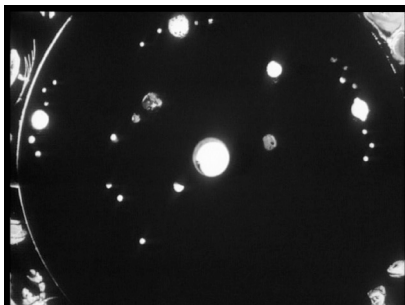
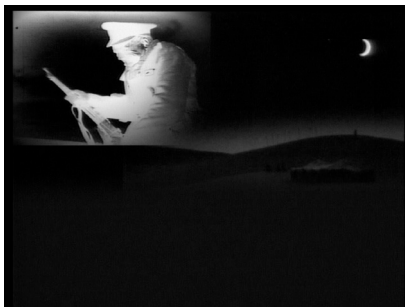
Stills from *The Eiffel Tower*,
King Kong and *the White*
Lady

WILD NIGHT WITH MOON

(14min., 1990)

Paul Klee and Walter Benjamin have told the story of an 'angel of history'. The storm wind, that blows from the direction of paradise, carries this angel into the future.

The film is dedicated to the documentarist, Joris Ivens.



Stills from *Wild Night with Moon*

SCREEN IV



Alexander Kluge became simultaneously known as a film director and a literary author at the end of the 1960s. To date he has published five comprehensive collections of stories, for which he has received every major German literature prize over the course of time. His main work is titled *Chronicle of Feeling* (2000 pages, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp: 2000). Characteristic of Kluge's style is his laconism and mixture of 'facts and fakes', from reality and fantasy. It is necessary, he says, to respect the severity of facts as much as the subjective protest energy that opposes the former. If one is to get to the heart of Critical Theory, then it is most likely to be found in Adorno's famous quote in *Minima Moralia*: "the almost impossible task is to let neither the power of others nor our own powerlessness stupefy us." Kluge's entire work is directed against this objective discouragement.

On this screen you will see Kluge reading three short stories: a circus story in which reality and fiction are perplexingly entangled, a story about the failed execution of a witch, and an intimate love story.

HEADLESS MAN

(2min.)



Still from *Headless Man*

THE TIME THAT MUST
PASS BEFORE AN
AUDIENCE TAKES THE
INITIATIVE

(4min.)

Die Zeit, die
vergehen muß, damit
eine Zuschauermenge
Initiative ergreift
(Chronik der Gefühle)

Still from *The Time that Must
Pass Before an Audience
Takes the Initiative*

'FIFFI'

(2min.)



STORIES



HEADLESS MAN

In the Janbowski Junior circus, in the south of Poland, beginning in 1928, a headless man performed.

On his shoulders and head he wore a frame topped by a fake neck. At the frame's chest level, hidden by a gauze, were eye slits, through which the artist could see his audience and see where he walked. At the climax of the performance there was a drum roll, and the cloth covering the fake neck was pulled away, revealing a bloody stump.

The audience was horrified.

This artist from the vicinity of Gomel, jealous of his young wife, a trapeze artist, fatally stabbed her trapeze partner and suspected rival. Then he put his distraught wife in a box and buried her alive in the ground. She was still dressed in the costume she wore when she left the tent to the crowd's applause.

The fact that the artist buried alive the person he allegedly loved most was deemed by the judges in Lodz to be particularly heinous. The murder of the rival, by contrast, would have been met with leniency. He received the death sentence, which was carried out by beheading. The story was published in tabloids around the world, which showed pictures not of the actual beheaded man, but rather of an advertisement for his performance "Headless Man".

"Headless Man" was published in Alexander Kluge, The Space Left by the Devil (Die Lücke, die der Teufel lässt), Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp: 2003.

THE TIME THAT MUST PASS BEFORE AN AUDIENCE TAKES THE INITIATIVE

The time that must pass before the audience takes the initiative.

By merely concealing a pregnancy and birth, the mother of a still-born child, according to the edicts of Henry II of France, who was not interested in the details of the laws he sanctioned, is branded an infanticide.

Hélène Gillet, 21 years old, victim of a man who took no heed of his action, stepped up to the scaffold. Around her, on the town square of Bourg, an unruly crowd. That morning it was not clear against what the indignance would turn. The condemned woman sat quietly on a type of small chair, waiting. The executioner, who, due to the heated discussion as to whether the stillborn child actually died by accident, was shaking, fell to his knees, begging the priest to secure the victim's forgiveness.

Finally, after many hours of preparing the scaffold amid cold westerly winds, the condemned woman kneeled on the sand pile and prayed.

The executioner declared: "I wish I could take your place."

He quickly lifted his sword, struck, and wounded the young woman on her left shoulder.

The bleeding girl moved to the right of the platform.

It began to drizzle.

The executioner's wife had suspected this unfortunate outcome. She had accompanied her husband from Dijon, had interpreted the crowd's growing rumblings more acutely than the guards had. She spoke short, poignant words into the executioner's ear, picked up Hélène, convinced her to be submissive, led her back to the sand pile, and handed her husband his sword.

The confounded man, who, in the fourth hours of the event, became the target of the crowd's ire, was pelted with stones, and again he missed the girl's neck.

Casting his sword away, he ran into a chapel. He begs for refuge. Aware of the impending loss of social status, his wife grabbed the rope by which the captive was led. Now the girl put up resistance. She was not sentenced to hang. It was not clear whether the executioner's wife tried to use the rope to

pull the condemned woman or to strangle her. Five or six times she pulled the noose taught.

The crowd cast stones. The executioner's wife pulled the girl to the edge of the scaffold seemingly sheltered from the stones. From a pocket she pulled out a large pair of scissors and stubbed the condemned woman in the throat and face. Ten wounds.

The young girl climbed onto the scaffold. She stamped her feet.

No one in town would have been able to execute her now. The executioner's wife, wounded, and now quite confounded herself, was taken down from the scaffold by guards.

A doctor examined the young condemned woman. Many wounds, none of them fatal.

"I knew God would stand by me," answered the girl.

"The Time Must Pass Before the Audience Takes the Initiative" was published in Alexander Kluge, Chronicle of Feeling (Chronik der Gefühle), Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp: 2000.

"Do you love me?"

She hesitated.

"I asked a question", he persisted.

"I heard." – "Well?"

She didn't want to answer. After a time, Fred returned to the theme: "Would you say that you love me?"

"What am I meant to say"

"You should have something to say. Why are we together if you don't contribute anything to the core of the matter?"

But just tell me. Do you love me, or don't you?"

"I would never admit that I didn't love you in the situation we are now in."

"That is not an answer. Yes or no?"

"A straight answer?"

She was trying to buy time. She peeled an apple and handed to him bit by bit.

The question wasn't to her liking.

"Do you love me? Tell me!"

She wanted to snub him sarcastically, and disregarded the question, which gained nothing by repetition. But since he remained serious and insistent on an answer, she responded thus:

"I can certainly say that I prefer it when you're here to when you are away."

– "Away? Where?"

"Away from me"

– "Like a dog?"

"I wouldn't put it that way."

"I'd put it differently. I'd prefer that Fiffi were here than away?"

"More or less."

Fred felt hurt.

She couldn't express it any other way.

For her, one untruth more or less in this life would be of no great significance. But the words "I love you" have a magical quality. One can only say that once in life, she thought. And in a situation like this, since I'm not 'one', she added, I wouldn't answer at all, for reasons of superstition, so as not to scare off the little bit of love that is there.

"Fiffi" was published in Alexander Kluge, Chronicle of Feeling (Chronik der Gefühle), Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp: 2000.

10 April — 22 June