



Let's Watch Together!  
European Cinema Education  
for Youth

GREEK ETHNOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTARIES

# Fishermen and Fishing

Leon Loisios, 1961

# Bathers

Eva Stefani, 2008

EDUCATIONAL FILE



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## 1. CINED: A COLLECTION OF FILMS FOR EUROPEAN CINEMA EDUCATION

CinEd is dedicated to the transmission of the Seventh Art as a cultural object and a means to help conceive the world. To accomplish this, common teaching methods were developed based on a selection of films produced by the European partner countries. This approach is designed to be adapted to our time, and to the fast, continuous, and significant changes in the way we see, receive, broadcast, and produce images. These images are seen on different types of screens: from the largest—that of a movie theatre—to the smallest on our smartphones, and likewise on TV and computer screens or tablets. Cinema is an art that is still young; its death has been predicted many times; needless to say this did not happen.

These changes are affecting cinema: therefore, its transmission must take them into account, particularly the increasing fragmentation of film viewing on different screens. CinEd publications propose and assert a teaching approach that is sensitive, inductive, interactive and intuitive and provide knowledge, tools for analysis and the potential for dialogue between images and films. The works are considered on different scales, as a whole, in fragments and with different temporalities—stills, shots, sequences.

This teaching material is an invitation to engage with the films in a free and flexible way. One of the main challenges being to seize the cinematographic images with intelligence, using different approaches: their description—essential step for any analytical process—and the ability to extract and select images, to organise, compare, and confront them. This includes images both in the film being discussed and in other films, as well as images from all visual and narrative arts (photography, literature, painting, theatre, cartoons...). The objective is that images no longer elude us, but rather make sense; in that sense, cinema is an art of synthesis that is especially valuable in building and strengthening the gaze of young generations.

**The educational file and the student sheets were prepared by the Greek Film Archive.**

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## 2. WHY THESE DOCUMENTARIES TODAY?

The Greek Ethnographic Documentaries programme consists of the films *Fishermen and Fishing* (1961, 22 min.) by Leon Loisios, and *Bathers* (2008, 51 min.) by Eva Stefani. The selection of the Greek Film Archive, in collaboration with all CinEd members, aims to bring students from Greece and across Europe in contact with the art of documentary film. The first documentaries in the history of cinema, for example *Nanook of the North* (1922) by the American Robert Flaherty or *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) by the Russian Dziga Vertov and others, did not simply record reality, but had an artistic aim and expressed concerns and sensitivities about social issues. Thus, documentary film emerged early on in the 1920s as an autonomous artistic genre and at the same time conversed with both social sciences and humanities. Nowadays, however, the creative documentary is overshadowed by the particularly large production of television documentary films that eschew the cinematic idiom in favour of the transmission of information and documentation. These television documentaries are more journalistic than cinematic. In contrast, artistic and ethnographic documentaries seek to engage in a conversation with reality in cinematic terms, and as the documentary maker Eva Stefani says, they may “make us see the world and ourselves anew.”<sup>1</sup> But Leon Loisios also pointed out that the purpose of the documentary is not to embellish reality, but to portray the truth: “We must remember that in addition to the free eye of the artist, there is also the critical eye of the viewer. He admires poetry, but is repelled by arbitrariness. He does not always accept, in the name of beauty, an illusory image of the world.”<sup>2</sup>

The documentary *Fishermen and Fishing* is one of the first ethnographic documentaries filmed in Greece. It captures in a cinematographic way the life of the community in the fishing village of Molyvos on the island of Lesbos in the northeastern Aegean Sea. From the 1950s, Loisios participated in the radical cultural movement that brought ethnographic documentary filmmaking to Greece. Ethnographic filmmaking combines art and science as ethnographic documentaries result from field research and participatory observation conducted by the filmmakers in the communities they film (see Context, p. 8-9). *Fishermen and Fishing* is the first Greek documentary film to feature ordinary people of toil and hardship. It eschews stereotypes of the usual Greek historical culture that associates New Greeks with the Ancient Greeks.<sup>3</sup> The poetic gaze of the film emphasizes the difficulties of their profession, their daily struggle with nature and their strong sense of community. It also highlights the poverty and the people’s utter dependence on fishing for their survival. What is remarkable about the documentary is the balance that Loisios maintains between documentation and poetic treatment

of reality. Despite the fact that it depicts a Greek community in the early 1960s and the ways people lived in the Aegean islands in past times, the documentary can appeal to audiences (not just the Greek audience) across time.

Eva Stefani is an important film director of ethnographic and observational documentaries in Greece and her work has been internationally recognized. Stefani’s work explores the limits of visibility by turning her camera on those whom society has rendered invisible, such as prisoners, inmates of institutions, the homeless, the unemployed and unemployable, and the elderly. Stefani’s documentaries neither inform nor observe reality from a distance. Her aim is to affectively immerse the viewer in the reality that she observes and transforms cinematically. Besides, for her, this art of documentary is a kind of self-observation.<sup>4</sup> For *Bathers*, she did field research and participatory observation in various spa towns around Greece, which are mainly visited by elderly people and people from lower social strata. In this documentary, she does not emphasize the different locations, but by composing a tour of the spa towns of Greece through editing, she focuses on making visible the youthfulness and joy of the elderly.

The documentaries of the Greek programme do not just document reality but also reveal, in a cinematic and poetic way, how the people in these communities experienced their everyday lives. The pedagogical aim of the programme is, therefore, to introduce children and young people to artistic and ethnographic documentaries, to familiarize themselves with and learn, by discussing and playing with the ways in which cinematic language can express in an experiential way aspects of reality, whether it is about past societies that have changed radically, such as the fishing village of Molyvos, or about contemporary forms of sociality of the elderly.



***Fishermen and Fishing* (1961),  
Leon Loisios**



***Bathers* (2008),  
Eva Stefani**

1 Eva Stefani, *Documentary: The Observation Game*, Patakis, Athens, 2016, p. 106.

2 Leon Loisios, “Reality, frame, content, rhythm and meaning,” *Catalogue of the 17th Festival Cinema and Reality*, 2004, p. 29.

3 Maria Chalkou, *Towards the creation of ‘quality’ Greek national cinema in the 1960s*, PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2008, p. 277, <https://theses.gla.ac.uk/1882/>

4 Greek Film Archive, Eva Stefani Tribute—10th Athens Avant Garde Film Festival, 2019, <http://10aagff.tainiothiki.gr/en/category/program/eva-stefani-tribute-en/>

The Greek Ethnographic Documentaries programme is the third addition of documentaries to CinEd's collection, following José Luis Guerin's Catalan documentary *Work in Progress* (2001) and the Programme of Lithuanian Documentaries, from which Robertas Verba's film *Dreams of Centenarians* (1969), also poetically depicts old age. The documentaries in the CinEd collection offer an opportunity for the children and young people of Europe to appreciate documentary as a cinematic art form. Moreover, by 'encountering' different European cultures through the documentaries, as well as through the other fiction films in the CinEd collection, the aim is to help students develop intercultural awareness, that is to say, to strengthen their understanding and respect for different cultural identities and for the common European cultural heritage.

### 3. INFORMATION

#### ***Fishermen and Fishing***

1961, short documentary, black and white, 22 min, Greece

**Director:** Leon Loisios

**Director of Photography:** Fotis Mesthenaios

**Editing:** Roviros Manthoulis

**Authors of the narration script:** Dimitris Kehaidis, Yannis Bakogiannopoulos

**Narration:** Stavros Tornes

**Music:** Yorgo Sicilianos

**Assistant director:** Spiros Vrachoritis

**Camera assistant:** Themis Vokos

**Sound:** Antonis Bairaktaris

**Titles:** Leonidas Christakis

**Scientific consultant:** Kostas Ananiadis

**Production:** Leon Loisios, Specta

**Original format:** 35mm film

**Restoration:** The restoration and digitization of the image in 2K and the sound from the first-generation negatives was performed by the Greek Film Archive in the framework of the project "A Season of Classic Films," an initiative of ACE (Association des Cinémathèques Européennes), with the support of the Creative Europe—MEDIA programme.

#### ***Bathers***

2008, documentary, colour, 51 min, Greece

**Screenplay / Direction / Cinematography:** Eva Stefani

**Editing:** Alexandros Sampsonidis

**Research:** Nikos Zoiopoulos, Varvara Papadopoulou

**Assistant Director /Assistant cameraperson:** Nikos Zoiopoulos

**Technical Consultants:** Ioannis Daridis, Bella Ivanova

**Production:** Eva Stefani, Graal S.A., ERT S.A.

**Awards:** FIPRESCI award for Greek production at the 11th Thessaloniki Documentary Festival, 1st prize for short film at the 3rd Chalkida Documentary Festival

Cinematic  
transformations  
of reality



The portrait  
of a seaside place

Representations  
of community



The youthfulness  
of old age

Truth and  
poetics

## 4. KEY THEMES

### CINEMATIC TRANSFORMATIONS OF REALITY

Although different from each other both in terms of subject matter and cinematic approach, the two documentaries of the programme, which are inspired by reality and capture aspects of it, are undoubtedly artistic cinematic works. In other words, they differ from informative broadcasts and journalistic reports presented as documentaries on television. They are artistic documentaries because they offer, through the cinematic treatment of their subject matter, a creative depiction of the reality they present. In this sense, their aim is not simply to record reality, which in any case cannot be captured in its entirety, but to produce an artistic truth that potentially transforms the conventional ways in which reality is perceived. However, it is important to stress that the filmmakers are not simply seeking to communicate their own aesthetics or their personal gaze. Loisos and Stefani offer their cinematic gaze to their viewers so that, through viewing, they, in turn, experience it, approach it and possibly reinterpret it. Stefani, attempting a definition of the artistic documentary film, writes: “It is a field of encounter where viewers, filmmakers and the filmed persons meet themselves through successive transformations of reality.”<sup>5</sup>

### THE PORTRAIT OF A SEASIDE PLACE

The title of Leon Loisos’ documentary is *Fishermen and Fishing*, but the subject is not exclusively fishing. The documentary cinematically explores life in the fishing village of Molyvos on the island of Lesbos in the early 1960s. In a cinematic way, it captures the hard work and patience required to fish in traditional ways as a means of survival for this par-

ticular island community in this particular decade. Its subject matter is therefore more about people’s relationship with their reality, which is largely determined by the sea. The documentary skilfully balances between documenting everyday life and observing people living by and with the sea and creatively processing this reality. The director and his crew filmed the faces of men, women and children. They observed their activities in their own space in a non-intrusive way, without seeking to dramatize or embellish their lives. If people make the place, the documentary serves more as a portrait of a seaside place. The successive flowing images of a 1960s Greece’s insular space are cinematically communicated as if its people belong to any part of the world that is bordered by the sea.

### THE YOUTHFULNESS OF OLD AGE

In the documentary *Bathers*, Eva Stefani does not simply aim to convey information about spa towns and the elderly people who visit them. She does not allow the film to function as a “mirror of reality,” simply observing the bathers through the “cinema of observation,” as she says.<sup>6</sup> By making use of the liquid therapeutic element that dominates these places, and focusing on the faces and bodies of the elderly, she first of all creates intimate relationships with the people. This intimacy leads them to “play” with the camera and to play the roles they choose for themselves. Stefani ultimately tells the story of the older people’s need to enjoy each other’s company, to flirt, to joke, to laugh, to sing, to argue, to cry, to reminisce, and of course to exorcise death, renewing their rendezvous for the next summer. The documentary makes

visible those small daily and sacred rituals of the joy of life. It offers an aesthetic experience that reveals that in the face of the inevitability of death, as human beings we “are at once our childhood, adolescence, maturity and old age,” to quote the great Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini.<sup>7</sup>

### REPRESENTATIONS OF COMMUNITY

As mentioned above, the documentary *Fishermen and Fishing* is not limited to the presentation of sea fishing in a specific place and time, but also shows the relationships of the people of the fishing community. For example, in the scene after night fishing with the trawlers, the fishermen have a meal together regardless of whether they had a good or a bad catch and, in another scene, when there are setbacks, the fishermen wait for the weather to change, discuss or play cards and backgammon in the café, a predominantly traditional, mainly male, community space of the time. The portrait of the fishing village includes shots of women doing chores in the alleys of the village, as well as children fishing or preparing to watch the Sunday film screening at the community cinema.

In *Bathers*, the communities of the elderly seem to be renewed, ‘reinvigorated,’ as they engage in bath therapy with small rituals of courtship, singing and joking, when they drink coffee or dine at the same table. In this documentary, of interest is the ‘Little Parliament’ in Edipsos, where after the morning bath the elderly, mostly men, gather and discuss the current political situation in impromptu meetings. The documentary shows that, despite progress towards gender equality, the image of political processes remains

5 Eva Stefani, *Documentary: The Observation Game*, op. cit., p. 41.

6 Quoted in Maria Economou, *Texts#35: Bathers—Eva Stefani*. Documenta 14, 2017, <https://www.documenta14.de/gr/public-tv/24102/35-louomenoi>

7 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, Nisos, Athens, 2010, p. 114.

male-dominated. However, like a modern-day Ecclesia, that is the assembly of the citizens in city-states of ancient Greece, or like London's Hyde Park, the elderly in the 'Little Parliament' form an alternative community of political speakers. Indeed, it is worth noting that as the documentary was filmed in 2007, their heated arguments reflect the difficult social conditions that prevailed just before the economic crisis that befell Greece from 2009 to 2018.<sup>8</sup>

## TRUTH AND POETICS

Both documentaries do not simply document reality but illuminate in a cinematic and poetic way the experiences of the filmed persons. They belong to the so-called 'ethnographic

<sup>8</sup> In 2008, when the global financial crisis started, Greece was already in a difficult position, as the country had adopted an irrational model of organization and economic management since the late 1990s and throughout most of the 2000s. The Greek economy experienced an unprecedented 'bubble' of economic activity, with an unrestrained and uncontrolled increase in public and private loan growth. See Panos Tsakloglou, George Economides *et al.*, *How did Greece reach the Memoranda?*, diANEOsis Research and Policy Institute, 2016.

cinema,' since they film reality after field research with participatory observation. At the same time, as artistic works, they use cinematic means of expression to transform it into the documentary genre.

In *Fishermen and Fishing*, the poetic nature of the documentary arises because the director did not attempt to subordinate the nuances of reality that emerged to a dramatic effect, but through filming and editing, he creatively and respectfully processed the images of people and their lives with the sea. In the words of Loisos: "If the people speak with their weather-beaten faces, if the objects maintain their material weight and their roughness to the touch, then the film has achieved its purpose."<sup>9</sup>

Stefani's aim is the perceptual and affective immersion of the viewers in the reality she observes. The bathers address the filmmaker with intimacy and thus the filmmaker lends us her own gaze upon them to make us feel and think about the joy

<sup>9</sup> Archival material from the Greek Film Archive, unpublished programme of the Film Club for the screening of the documentaries *Life in Mytilene* and *Fishermen and Fishing* by Leon Loisos, undated.

of life in old age. The playful and therefore poetic way of presenting the elderly bathers may perhaps lead young viewers to see the reality of old age with different eyes, possibly connecting it with the faces of their grandparents. In addition, however, young viewers are given the opportunity to imagine, through these aquatic images, fragments of themselves in the past, present and future.

## SYNOPSIS

### *Fishermen and Fishing*

The documentary focuses on the traditional ways of fishing and at the same time presents aspects of the everyday life of the fishermen, but also of the women and children of the Molyvos community. The village of Molyvos (the ancient Mithymna) is located on Lesbos, an island in the northeastern Aegean Sea, where, in the early 1960s, modernization had not yet arrived. The incessant struggle of their life with the sea, with its few moments of rest and relaxation, sets the pace of the film.

### *Bathers*

It is a documentary that focuses on the carefree and melancholic nature of spa towns. Life in spa towns moves slowly and at a pace reminiscent of other times. In this languid atmosphere, the elderly feel detached from the norms imposed by their social environment. Instead of elderly people, the viewer has the impression of being surrounded by teenagers at a summer camp.

# II – ABOUT THE DOCUMENTARIES

## 1. CONTEXT

### THE ETHNOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTARY

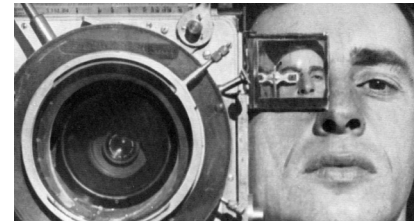
It is difficult to determine exactly what makes a documentary ethnographic, as films that were identified as ethnographic in one historical period were not considered ethnographic in another or in a different socio-political context. In any case, ethnographic documentaries have greater or lesser degrees of affinity with the discipline of social anthropology.<sup>10</sup> Just as ethnography, as a research methodology—which includes field research and participant observation—has historically transformed in more reflective and critical directions, ethnographic filmmaking is dynamically transformed according to the criteria of the producers and recipients of films of this particular genre.<sup>11</sup> What follows is a brief historical reference to the main representatives and trends of ethnographic filmmaking.

Regarding the relations between ethnographic documentary and the science of Anthropology, in the early 20th century, when the Lumière cameramen were filming images of reality (see “The Cinema of Origins” in the CinEd collection), anthropologists, usually in the service of the administration of colonial states, were tentatively beginning to use film to study endangered societies, societies that were described as ‘primitive’ at the time. Since then, the widespread perception has emerged that ethnographic cinema is only about ‘exotic’ societies. In the 1930s, the American anthropologists Margaret Mead<sup>12</sup> and Gregory Bateson used film in their field research in Bali, thus helping to eliminate to some extent the preconceptions of ‘primitivism’ that had become entrenched in social anthropology. The substantial development of scientific anthropological filmmaking as a research tool for recording human cultures began in the 1950s. American anthropologists, such as Timothy Asch, John Marshall and Robert Gardner, documented endangered societies and sometimes enriched their documentaries with fictional visual elements.<sup>13</sup>

Regarding the relationship of the ethnographic documentary to the history of cinema, many consider the first ethnographic film to be *Nanook of the North* (1922) by the American Robert Flaherty, about the Eskimos. Although Flaherty was not an anthropologist and the film is not purely a documentary, it is nevertheless considered an ethnographic documentary because

the director conducted field research through participant observation in the Arctic Circle and attempted to portray daily life and the changing seasons from the perspective of the native Inuit.<sup>14</sup> The same period saw the creation of remarkable documentaries, milestones in the history of artistic documentary filmmaking, which, in one way or another, used cinematic language to transform the simple recording of reality. For example, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) by the Russian Dziga Vertov, *À propos de Nice* (1930) by the Frenchman Jean Vigo and *Rain* (1929) by the Dutchman Joris Ivens.

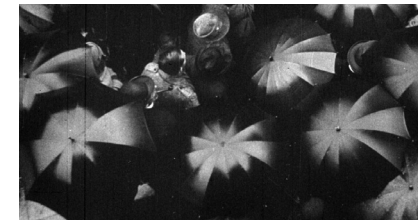
In the 1930s, the so-called *British documentary movement* had a great influence. Led by John Grierson, the *British movement* established the notion that the documentary was a tool for information and social intervention with the ultimate aim of collective awakening. According to



*Man with a Movie Camera* (1929),  
Dziga Vertov



*À propos de Nice* (1930),  
Jean Vigo



*Rain* (1929), Joris Ivens

<sup>10</sup> See Jay Ruby, *Picturing Culture. Explorations of Film and Anthropology*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> Eva Stefani, *10 Texts About Documentary*, Patakis, Athens, 2007, p. 87.

<sup>12</sup> Margaret Mead was convinced that cinema was an important medium for understanding, and that it is possible and important for societies to learn from each other. In 1976, the American Museum of Natural History, with which she was collaborating, established the Margaret Mead Film Festival in her honor. To this day, the festival remains an important institution for ethnographic documentaries. See <https://www.amnh.org/explore/margaret-mead-festival>

<sup>13</sup> Konstantinos Aivaliotis, *A concise overview of the history of ethnographic cinema*, Ethnofest—Ethnographic Film Festival, <https://www.ethnofest.gr/el/research-and-education/ethnographic-cinema-and-accessibility/introduction-to-ethnographic-cinema/>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



Grierson's definition, documentary is "the creative treatment of actuality."<sup>15</sup> His documentary *Drifters* (1929) is about the life of fishermen in Scotland, a similar subject to Loiosios' *Fishermen and Fishing*. Other well-known representatives of the movement are Basil Wright and Harry Watt.

It is worth noting that a film movement that influenced ethnographic documentary filmmaking to shift from 'exotic' to familiar subjects was Neorealism, which developed in Italy from 1943 to the early 1950s. Neorealist fiction films drew on themes from the everyday life and social reality of the time. They focused on the working class and social margins, employed amateur actors, used local accents and dialects, and filmed physical spaces and locations.<sup>16</sup> Two well-known neorealist films, even shot in the fishing villages of southern Italy, are *The Earth Trembles* (1948) by Luchino Visconti and *Stromboli* (1950) by Roberto Rossellini.

The 1960s brought many changes to ethnographic cinema. The technological innovations of smaller and lighter cameras and the possibility of better sound recording led to more flexibility and immediacy in filmmaking. An important documentary genre that influenced ethnographic cinema is the American *direct cinema*, best known for which is Frederick Wiseman and his documentary *Titicut Follies* (1967) about a psychiatric asylum. *Direct cinema* saw the camera as an invisible tool for recording. Then, in editing, the footage of reality was rendered with dramatic intensity. During the same period, the *cinéma vérité* (cinema of truth) of the French filmmaker anthropologist Jean Rouch was very influential in Europe. Rouch, in contrast to the invisible use of the camera in *direct cinema*, invited filmed persons to improvise and "play" with the camera so that, in the documentary, they could actively participate in the revelation of their own, often silenced, lived truths.<sup>17</sup> For example, the documentary *Mad Masters* (1955) depicts the ritual of a religious movement in then colonial Ghana, during which its members imitate, in a state of possession and trance, the intricate military rituals of their colonial conquerors.

The 1970s gave rise to a new trend in ethnographic documentary filmmaking, *observational cinema*, pioneered by Herb Di Gioia, David Hancock and David MacDougall. In the early 1970s, Di Gioia and Hancock filmed a series of four observational documentaries called *Vermont People*, in which they explored aspects of the white, working class in rural America. The observational documentary is inspired by the two main methods of Social Anthropology: field research and participant observation. According to Eva Stefani,<sup>18</sup> who represents this trend in Greece, the long-term observation of persons and situations leads to the revelation of aspects that were not visible at first sight. Moreover, for the observational documentary, low-key stories are chosen and a necessary condition is the familiarity and creation of mutual respect between the filmmaker and the filmed persons, so that the documentary reveals some unseen dimensions of reality.



*Titicut Follies* (1967), Frederick Wiseman



*Mad Masters* (1955), Jean Rouch



*Peter and Jane Flint* (1975),  
Herb Di Gioia and David Hancock

<sup>15</sup> Eva Stefani, *10 Texts on Documentary*, op. cit., pp. 23-27.

<sup>16</sup> Eva Stefani, *Documentary: The Observation Game*, op. cit., pp. 57-59.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 59-67

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 45-54.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF GREEK DOCUMENTARY

The history of documentary films in Greece begins with the Manakis brothers, Yannakis and Miltos, at the beginning of the 20th century in the region of the then Ottoman Macedonia, that is, at the same time as the “Lumière Views” and Pathé’s “Outdoor Scenes.”<sup>19</sup> Their first and best-known one-minute film, *The Weavers*, was filmed around 1905.<sup>20</sup> From 1906 until 1940, during a turbulent period of warfare and political unrest in the Balkans, Greece produced mainly newsreels for propaganda in favor of the government of the day and a few folklore documentaries.<sup>21</sup>

The documentary film attracted the interest of politicized and pioneering filmmakers in the 1950s and 1960s. Besides, as in other European countries, both commercial cinema, and art cinema and cinephilia developed in Greece after the war. The establishment of Film Clubs and the Greek Film Archive in 1963 contributed to this. Before making a more specific reference to the development of Greek documentary cinema, it is useful to give a historical overview of the post-war social situation in Greece.

After the Second World War, during which the main movement of the Greek Resistance against the occupation troops was the National Liberation Front (EAM), founded on the initiative of four Left parties, and after the Civil War (1946-1949), the post-war political situation in Greece has been described by Maria Komninos as a period of ‘repressive modernization.’<sup>22</sup> In the climate of the Cold War, the ideas and people of the Left suffered authoritarian state repression, while at the same time rapid economic growth and modernization took place. However, the economic growth was such that it widened social inequalities, resulting in accelerated political divisions and ideological confrontations.<sup>23</sup> Despite the fact that the state would establish the Greek Film Week in 1960, the precursor of the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, the institutional framework was such that it did not facilitate the financing of film production. From the early 1960s, social and cultural movements of contestation and protest developed, such as feminist and anti-war collectives as well as the New Greek Cinema, but the

19 In Michaël Dacheux, *The Cinema of Origins*, Pedagogical Package, CinEd, pp. 6-10, <https://www.cined.eu/movies/60dc945ce43c3ce0abc3d8884>

20 The art film *Ulysses’ Gaze* (1995) by the most famous Greek auteur Theo Angelopoulos refers to these pioneering Balkan filmmakers.

21 Fotos Lamprinos, *My Power Lies the Love of the Lens. Newsreels as Documents of History (1895-1940)*, Kastaniotis, Athens, 2005.

22 Maria Komninos, *From the Market to the Spectacle: A study on the construction of the public sphere and cinema in contemporary Greece (1950-2000)*, Papazisis, Athens, 2011, pp. 53-63.

23 As elsewhere in Europe, the factions of the Right, the Centre, and the Left constitute the Greek party system. However, the Greek peculiarity lies in the fact that the Right, which emerged victorious from the Civil War, emphasizes anti-communism and the repression of the popular classes, while the Left, as the loser in the Civil War, remained torn between expressing a defensive party discourse and expressing the discourse of the mass social protest movements. Standing between the Right and the Left, the main goal of the Centre-Left at that time was to overcome the polarization of the Civil War. Ibid, pp. 70-73.

country was eventually led to the collapse of democracy when a military dictatorship was imposed, which lasted from 1967 to 1974. Among other economic factors, economic growth was the result of internal and external migration, urbanization, and rising tourism. This is the case of Lesbos in the 1960s, depicted in the documentary *Fishermen and Fishing*: many people migrated to the cities or abroad and later, towards the end of the 1980s, the island became a tourist destination and Molyvos one of its most visited towns.

As to the development of documentaries after the war, Roussos Koundouros (brother of the cinema auteur and artist Nikos Koundouros) founded the Institute of Educational and Scientific Cinema in 1953 for the production of educational documentaries. In 1960, on the initiative of Roviros Manthoulis, the “Group of 5” was founded, with the aim of disseminating and financing the art of documentary filmmaking. Roussos Koundouros, Iraklis Papadakis, Fotis Mesthenaios and Yannis Bakogiannopoulos completed the “Group,” which produced fifteen short documentaries, financed by the state or by business companies. Leon Loisios was politically active in the centre-left and leftist party of United Democratic Left (EDA) and belonged to the collective “Film Element of EDA,” whose members were directors, cinematographers and film technicians. Loisios had close relations with the persons who made up the “Group of 5” and three of its members participated in the creation of *Fishermen and Fishing*, which was an independent production (Roviros Manthoulis, Fotis Mesthenaios and Yannis Bakogiannopoulos).<sup>24</sup>

From September 1st to 10, 1961, the 1st International Festival of Ethnographic and Sociological Cinema was organized in Athens, on the initiative of Roussos Koundouros. The programme of the festival included discussions and screenings of some 110 films under the general title “From Flaherty’s *Nanook* to Jean Rouch’s *Chronicle of a Summer*.” Prominent personalities associated with the art of documentary filmmaking, such as Roberto Rossellini, Jean Rouch and Henri Storck, were invited to the festival. The audience responded warmly, with a large turnout for both the screenings and the debates. Greek production was represented by the films *Fishermen and Fishing* (1961) by Leon Loisios, *Anastenaria* [Barefoot fire-walking ritual] (1959) by Roussos Koundouros, and *The Devil’s Island* (1960) by Antonis Triandafyllidis.<sup>25</sup> From the above, it is apparent that in Greece, already from the early 1960s, great importance was given to the cinema of the real as filmmakers drew elements from the immediate reality in order to create their artistic work.

Important art documentaries of this period include: The short political documentary *One Hundred Hours in May* (1964) by Dimos Theos and Fotos Lamprinos, which explores the history of the assassination of Grigoris Lambrakis, an associate MP of the United Democratic Left party

24 Maria Chalkou, *Towards the creation of ‘quality’ Greek national cinema in the 1960s*, op. cit., pp. 90, 103, 257.

25 Ibid, pp. 66-67.

and a leading figure of the Greek peace movement of the 1960s. Takis Kanellopoulos' short ethnographic documentary *Macedonian Wedding* (1960), in which wedding customs and traditions are filmed with the mystique and rhythms of Spring. Also, in the documentary *Theraic Dawn* (1968) by Stavros Tornes and Kostas Sfikas, a visual social research is carried out in Santorini, at a time when the island's agricultural economy was gradually giving way to the rising tourism. The documentary *Megara* (1974) by Sakis Maniatis and Yorgos Tsemberopoulos highlights the farmers' struggle against the industrial expropriation of their region in Attica.

An important institution for documentary film in Greece was the Festival Cinema and Reality, founded in 1987 by Andreas Pagoulatos. In 1999, the Thessaloniki Documentary Festival was founded, while the Ethnofest—Ethnographic Film Festival started in 2010. In 2016,



*Theraic Dawn* (1968),  
Stavros Tornes and Kostas Sfikas



*Megara* (1974), Sakis Maniatis and  
Yorgos Tsemberopoulos



*Anastenaria* (1959), Roussos Koundouros



*Macedonian Wedding* (1960),  
Takis Kanellopoulos



*Raw Material* (2011), Christos Karakepelis

the Greek Film Archive was an honoured film archive in the 37th edition of the International Documentary Film Festival Cinéma du réel at the Centre Pompidou and presented a programme of Greek documentaries. One of the best-known contemporary Greek documentaries is *Mourning Rock* (2001) by Philippos Koutsaftis, that follows the daily life of the people of modern Elefsina over the period of a decade, and at the same time records the archaeological excavations carried out in the area. Also, Christos Karakepelis' documentary *Raw Material* (2011) records the toil of scrap metal collectors and criticises the industrial accumulation of wealth from metal recycling.

## 2. THE DOCUMENTARISTS

### LEON LOISIOS

Leon Loisios was born in Corfu in 1934. During the period of 1954-1956, he edited the magazine of literature and art *The First Step*. From 1957 to 1959, he studied cinema at the Stavrakos Cinema School. In 1959, he founded the independent documentary film production and distribution company Specta, while also having the artistic editorship of the magazine *Cinema-Theatre*. In 1959, he began the research for his first documentaries, *Fishermen and Fishing*, *Life in Mytilene* and *Lesvos*, which, between 1961 and 1963, were screened at the international festivals of Moscow, Berlin and Belgrade respectively. *Fishermen and Fishing* was screened at the 1st International Festival of Ethnographic and Sociological Film in 1961 in Athens.



Leon Loisios

During the same period, Loisios was a collaborator of the Institute of Educational and Scientific Cinema of Roussos Koundouros, as well as general secretary of the Board of Directors of the Hellenic Film Club and the Federation of Film Clubs of Greece. He was associated with important personalities in the cinema and artistic field, such as Roviros Manthoulis who, as we have seen above, had started a movement for educational and creative documentary filmmaking in Greece with the “Group of 5,” contributing to the Greek documentary and the cultural activism of the 1960s by the artists of the political Left. He was an active member of the leftist United Democratic Left party and, in the period of 1964-1965, he planned the production of a series of newsreels entitled *Greek Life*, also known as the *EDA Newsreels*. He was the production manager of the Manthoulis’ film *Face to Face*, which was completed in 1966, a year before the imposition of the dictatorship of the Colonels, which banned its screening. In 1967, Loisios was imprisoned and then exiled until 1970 in the island of Aegina. In 1982, he founded the company TV Journal Ltd. and collaborated on Ert1 [National Television] productions, such as *Panorama of the Century*, until 1993.

### SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

*Lesvos*, 1961

*Life in Mytilene*, 1961

*Greek Life (EDA Newsreels)*, 1964-1965

*Panorama of the Century*, co-director with Fotos Lamprinos, 1982-1986

*In the Company of Football*, co-director with Dionysis Grigoratos, 1964-1965

*A Historical Journey Through Modern Greece*, 1991-1992

*The Hidden Treasure of the Benaki Museum*, 2005



*Life in Mytilene* (1961), Leon Loisios

## EVA STEFANI

Eva Stefani was born in 1964 in Alexandria, Virginia, USA. She studied political science in Athens and film in France, the USA and the UK. In 1997, she completed her doctoral thesis at Panteion University. She is a filmmaker of creative and observational documentaries, and experimental films, a visual artist and a writer. Currently, alongside her artistic work, she works as a professor of Communication and Media Studies at the University of Athens, specializing in Film Theory and Practice. Her films have been screened and awarded at international festivals (IDFA, Cinéma du Réel, Margaret Mead Film and Video Festival, États généraux du film documentaire, Internationale Short Film Festival Oberhausen, etc.), museums and international art exhibitions. Eva Stefani has authored the books *10 Texts on Documentary* (2007) and *Documentary: The Observation Game* (2016). Her articles have been published in collective works. In 2014, she published her first literary book, *Finn's Hair*.



Eva Stefani

## SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

*Athene*, 1995

*Acropolis*, 2001

*Abraham and Jacob*, 2002

*The Box*, 2004

*What Time is It?*, 2007

*Roommates*, 2007

*The Return of E.C. Gonatas*, 2012

*Manuscript*, 2017

*Days and Nights of Demetra K.*, 2021



*The Box* (2004), Eva Stefani

### 3. THE MAKING OF THE DOCUMENTARIES

#### FISHERMEN AND FISHING

Yannis Bakogiannopoulos, a member of the creative team of the documentary at all stages of production and author of the narration script, provided the authors with archival material from the presentation he had made at the 1st International Festival of Ethnographic and Sociological Film in 1961, entitled “Methodology of filming an ethnographic documentary.” Below are excerpts from this presentation that shed light on how the documentary *Fishermen and Fishing* was created.



The film crew shooting *Fishermen and Fishing*

#### BETWEEN SCIENCE AND ART

*In terms of method, an exclusively “scientific” or “artistic” approach to the subject is equally dangerous. The former will give a partial view of reality, especially in terms of depth, because it relies on logic and acts by the juxtaposition of observations, while the multiplicity of life requires internal synthesis and the superficially absurd is a “working” part of our existence. The “artistic” approach carries three dangers on its side: the strong projection of the artist’s*

*personality, which will offer an interpretation that may be interesting from an aesthetic point of view, but by falsifying the objective data, it will undermine the reason for the existence of the ethnographic documentary. A second danger is the superficial journalistic or travel aspect of the subject, which makes all documentaries ultimately similar to each other in both content and form. A third danger is the aesthetic aspect that subordinates everything to the search for beauty at all costs. By combining the scientific and artistic approaches, one can hope for the advantages of both methods: the objective and precise observation of science and the emotional universal perception of art, with the common goal of capturing the Truth.*

#### FIELD RESEARCH AND PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

*A first visit to the island of Lesvos gave birth to the initial idea. Indeed, the intimate encounter with a life that is complete, concentrated, closed and self-sufficient, and at the same time in constant communication with nature, was an element capable of arousing the interest of people subjected to the erratic and fragmented life of Athens. This different space and time of life was the most important but also the most difficult fact to grasp. Then followed the stage of the first shaping of the vast material to be filmed, the cores of interest, the first themes were defined and shaped according to the rules of cinematic economy.*

*At this point in the project, the presence of an authentic local man, Stratis Anastasselis, played an important role [...], Anastasselis became the driver and advisor of the crew. All matters were discussed exhaustively with him before shooting, so that every detail of the people’s manners and their particular idiomatic language was known to the director.*

#### FILMING

*Filming is the most difficult part of an ethnographic film. Truth really isn’t so easily touched in a documentary that doesn’t want to be an exploration of nature but a study of people. Making the film requires the conscious and active participation of these people. [...] That’s why, after getting to know them well and after arranging them in the space, people were left to do their work in peace [...]. The film crew was kept as discreet and silent as possible. It waited and started shooting only when no one was paying attention. So, of course, there was the terrible difficulty of not being able to repeat a scene. The crew had to manage to get all the shots in the actual duration of the scene. The gain respectively is that in editing, the reconstruction of real-life time was easily and successfully done.*

*The film camera has always approached people, recorded their existence and then, by retreating, placed them in their surroundings, united them with the reality that surrounds them [...].*

*Simplicity was sought in the découpage: lenses with a normal focal length, natural shooting angles, a ratio of medium and wide shots with particular care not to abuse the close-up, camera movement organically tied to the mobility of the subject itself.*



**The cinematographer Fotis Mesthenaios shooting  
*Fishermen and Fishing***

## EDITING

*The inclination to embellish the issue to give it a tighter pace or to dramatize it was ruled out. Editing was not used as an autonomous expressive medium that allows the arbitrary success of an aesthetic impression but as a technical means for the perfect organization of visual elements. Thus, the achievements of the shots regarding the unity of space and time of the action were preserved. After the first cut, many scenes were recut.*

*When necessary, synthetic editing was used. Today, it would of course not be acceptable to show, for example, the dynamiter fisherman in one shot and the explosion in another. It is only by their simultaneous presence in the frame that a truly and aesthetically necessary relationship is born.*

## SOUND AND NARRATION

*The sounds were chosen to be realistically rich, to emphasize the verisimilitude. An acoustic space was thus added to the visual one, e.g., with the perpetual presence of the sea.*

*Throughout the shooting, Anastasselis, who was with the crew, was systematically writing down everything that was happening in front of him—a story on paper. From the multitude of these pages, with the simple, vivid, rich local dialect, the narration script came out [...] and the narrator was chosen to have a correspondingly raw and rustic voice that blended with the text and with the simple images of life in Mytilene.*

## BATHERS

In the context of the inclusion of her documentary in the CinEd collection, Eva Stefani granted the authors an interview about *Bathers*. Below are excerpts from the interview that shed light on how the documentary *Bathers* was created.<sup>26</sup>

## THE INSPIRATION

*I've always loved spa towns, because my grandmother used to go there. [...] I was very close to my grandmother and I was always fascinated by the landscape of spa towns and the people who go there. I had been thinking about it for a long time that I wanted to do something in relation to spa towns and I thought about again and again, so at some point I did it. [...] Oh, I had also visited Methana, because there was a friend of mine who did his military service there and he was also a doctor and he was seeing people coming for the baths, and that's where I was completely fascinated and I decided that I would love to make a film about it.*

<sup>26</sup> You can watch the full interview [here](#) (English subtitles available); CinEd: Interview with Eva Stefani (dir. of *Bathers*, 2008)

*Because contrary to what people think, that old age is necessarily withering away, there was a place of playfulness there, which is what I saw in Methana, and I actually came across that throughout the film as well. That is to say, the elderly people were looking forward to when June would come so that they could meet and relive what they had experienced the previous year, that is, as a kind of camp, but a happy camp.*

*What I loved and was very moved by was this sense of community and also the joy and the bonding that I found there between the elderly, and a sexuality that was also rampant. And you wouldn't expect it to exist at that age—and also carnival laughter. That is, all the things not considered typical for that age.*

### FIELD RESEARCH AND PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

*The baths are taken very early in the morning, then you sleep and all the rest of the day is like this, cooking, chatting, TV, all the rest of the day you do this, that is, you socialize with people, so I think you are talking about yourself too, that is, if you don't open up yourself, why should people open up to you. But I wanted to, I mean I was also learning embroidery. I really like older people, I'm very comfortable with older people, more comfortable than I am with people my age, because I grew up a lot with my grandparents too. So, it was something I enjoyed; I didn't do it for the film and I never do anything for the film if I don't like the company I'm in, otherwise I won't go. So, it just kind of happened naturally. [...] There were some people who didn't want to, so we didn't hang around, we didn't spend time together.*

### OBSERVATIONAL DOCUMENTARY

*Regarding the form [of observational documentary], there are no interviews. It is based on staying as long as we can, not that this is always successful, the extended period of time, you can do something like that in a day and it can be the most valuable. We try not to have interviews but conversations, that is, not preparing the questions in advance, but usually not having questions at all, that is, being absorbed in what is going on. Absorption is also what makes you enjoy the filming as well. [...] We were hanging out and for me it was enjoyable, if there's not that element of enjoyment from you too, there's no point, at least for me.*

*Other people make documentaries that are sociological in character. For me, it doesn't have that nature, nor is it investigative—to learn something, to draw a conclusion. It's more about*

*being left with a question, with an enigma [...]. I am more interested in rendering an experiential condition in which I wish someone else could enter, to dive into the water too, that is, an affective experience [...], than in exposing a situation in which we draw some conclusions. [...] The observational documentary remains an enigma, if you try to lead it towards conclusions, this type of approach fails.*



**Bathers (2008),  
Eva Stefani**



## FILMING

*In the mud bath I was covered with mud and I was in danger because you couldn't reach on the bottom. I was in danger of falling in with my little camera. But there was no other way, I couldn't stay outside, how would I film, so it was either do it or not. I went in; I didn't go in many times, I only went in three times. It was also difficult because I had to film from really close, I was holding on to something, or a woman was holding me from behind so that I could have some kind of stability, but also to avoid filming the other woman, who of course you wouldn't recognize, but if it occurred to her that I was filming her and she didn't want to... [...] I couldn't meet them all, especially there I didn't stay for too long, I only spent a week at Philippi, it wasn't like at Kaiafas where I spent a long time, I spent a month and a half. It's not always the case, that you have to get to know them for long, it's not always the case in documentary.*

*In there [the underground baths of Kaiafas], because it was a special highlight that we were going into the water, there was no objection. I missed a lot of things because at one point the camera broke and then they were saying very nice things about the war, it was a topic that came up very often, the war and the Occupation, and there was a huge argument about the war, and about the Germans [referring to World War II]. It's something that I missed because the camera crashed and we had cassettes at the time and they couldn't be repaired... and I couldn't bring that back into the conversation.*

*There were two of us [the camerapersons] but sometimes I was alone. In Ikaria, I went completely alone. I remember one occasion when I had gone to Ikaria to find out where these troughs, not troughs, some passages that are in the sea, that have thermal baths in the sea, and I wasn't prepared to film and I hadn't brought a bathing suit, but it was either do it or not because I was leaving in a day, and I found them, so I said to myself, I'll go in now in my underwear, and whatever happens, I said, I'll go in and wait to see who comes. I went in in my underwear, I said to myself, now they won't see me [...] and some people came in, two friends, who were philosophizing, and I said, please can I shoot, for a documentary... Shoot, girl, shoot, they said. I mean, you're also running into people who are unshameful. I think the water helps, I think it's liberating, to a large extent I think that's what it is. Because if you see a man in his clothes at a social event it's different, whereas if he's in the water and he's slogging around....*



**Bathers (2008),  
Eva Stefani**

## EDITING

*Editing takes me too much time, because I can't make up my mind. What is the story, what is what, I get very tangled up and even though I shoot very little, I don't shoot much, I shoot very little, but still it took us a year. [...] You have an idea of how you want things to be a priori, which may not be in the material. [...] You may have an idea, like you have written a script, which reality doesn't give you [...]. Something sticks in your mind, with a feeling that you have, which, okay, comes from reality, but something that you want, and to get rid of it, while you say that you want to be absorbed by reality—I often get this—you are stuck with something and to get rid of it takes a lot of time.*

# III – ANALYSES

## 1. THE DOCUMENTARY CHAPTERS

### FISHERMEN AND FISHING



1 – Information and opening credits with images of fishing and daily activities. (00:00)



2 – Narration and images of fishermen and views of the village and the ancient Castle of Molyvos, pictures of the cafés and alleys in the village, and of women and children in their daily activities. (01:34)



3 – Narration and images of types of fishing with nets and boats in a group. (03:08)



4 – Narration and images of night fishing with trawlers, and a scene of children fishing with torches and harpoons. (04:44)



5 – Short sequence, with narration and images of fishing with a kiurtos, the “zarganio” technique and a longline. (09:34)



6 – Narration and images of dynamite fishing. (10:31)



7 – Narration and images of women going to church, men in the café and children outside the cinema. (12:16)



8 – Narration and images of fishing with a motorized trawler. (13:30)



9 – Narration about days when fishing is not possible and images of fishermen in anchored fishing gear waiting in the café for the weather to change. (17:36)



10 – Narration and images of fishing with a beach seine and pulling the net from the shore, along with images of octopus fishing and of children fishing on the beach. (18:18)



11 – Images of a child, a donkey, the coffee shop, and idle people in the village. In the last shot, a fisherman throws a net at the camera lens. (21:50 - 22:39)

## BATHERS



1 – Footage from the filmmaker's family archive with her grandmother and her own voice-over account of her relationship with spa towns. Dark shot of an underground bathhouse and opening titles. (22:56)



2 – Title "The Lake" with shots of the lake, old men playing cards and women talking either to the camera or to each other inside and outside the bathhouse facilities. (23:56)



3 – Title "The Parliament" and footage of bathers at the sea, in preparation for the informal assembly with the hanging of the mirror as well as shots of various male speakers at the assembly. (27:49)



4 – Title "Morning Bath," with shots of the boat going back and forth on the lake and semi-lit shots of the underground bathhouse, with bathers singing and joking while addressing the camera. (32:56)



5 – Scene of an elderly man sharing memories by showing photos to the filmmaker. (37:45)



6 – Title "Mud Bath" with shots of women enjoying their mud bath, while singing, laughing, chanting and talking to the camera. (39:09)



7 – Title "The Ocean Liner" with footage of an informal assembly of bathers, with a man's speech stating that "we are all together in an ocean liner." (42:16)



8 – Title "Midday," a woman cooking and other women gathering, drinking coffee and predicting the future in the coffee cup. (47:49)



9 – Title "Hot Sea Water," beach footage of bathers discussing leprosy treatment and healing of body and spirit. (51:51)



10 – Title "Late Afternoon Bath," where elderly people are flirting, singing and dancing in the same underground bathhouse. (55:27)



11 – Title "The Last Parliament" with footage of the farewell assembly of the informal parliament and the recitation of a poem. (1:05:17)



12 – Closing titles with footage of elderly bathers in a swimming pool. (1:12:04)

## 2. CINEMA QUESTIONS

### FILMING WATER

A common element of both documentaries is that the environment they film is predominantly aquatic. Images of people's life on land, both in the fishing village and in the facilities of the spa towns, are shown alongside those where water dominates. Possibly, the element of water that surrounds and runs through these places makes us perceive these filmed realities more poetically. By showing images of people and things as surrounded water, the viewers' attention is drawn to the movement, translocation and flow of people and things. By filming water, the documentaries, each in its own way, transform reality into an artistic experience in which we do not just see static images of people, but can experience more deeply the rhythm of their fluid images. After all, water and cinema have the same properties: movement and flow.

From its very beginnings, cinema has produced images of water. One of the earliest tracking shots in its history is on a boat in motion (see *Connections*, pp. 33). The novelty of a medium that captures movement and time meant that filmmakers were drawn to the element that best expresses the flow of time (in Greek we say, for example, that “time flows like water”). In other words, exploring water as an image meant exploring the possibilities of the cinematic medium. Thus, water is the ideal environment to show that the world is in incessant motion and change, and that reality itself can have a deeper visual rhythm. Filmmaking that explores the image of water actually contains the possibility of revealing a normally invisible dimension, as it makes visible a reality in ceaseless flux.<sup>27</sup>

In *Fishermen and Fishing*, the rhythm of the film is determined by the toil of fishing, which highlights the difficulties of life with the sea. Moreover, the camera keeps its distance, few shots are used at a close proximity to the faces, there is no communication between the persons and the filmmakers, and they do not look at the camera. Nonetheless, by expressively using the image of the sea, the documentary shows the cooperation that most fishing methods require. There are many shots with panoramic camera movement that capture life in the harbour, but there are also relatively long tracking shots on board, following the movement of the boats and giving us the feeling of the sea. But even in the shots where there is no image of the sea, for example in the images showing children and women, there is a sense of the sea breeze, thus poetically assembling the portrait of the seaside place.

In *Bathers*, the filmmaker behind the camera is, in many cases, also a bather. Thus, the intimacy that developed made it easier for the bathers to address the camera without shame or embarrassment. From the shots of the bathers in the water or mud, the liquid or fluid element is not merely decorative but seems to be functional, as it contributes to the relaxed nature of the communication. In addition, however, the time the filmmaker had taken to get to know the bathers and talk to them before filming, results in the bathing shots of the elderly revealing selves that are not conventionally expected of their age and in their daily lives—they joke, laugh, flirt and sing, thus ‘warding off’ the ailments and difficulties of old age. Moreover, Stefani also shows a preference for relatively long shots with the camera in hand, following the movement or gaze of the filmed persons. In this way, which relies less on editing cuts, she shows the situations and relationships within the flow of the shot and the shots between them, so that the viewers see and experience durations that correspond more closely to the temporalities of reality.

### ASSEMBLING THE TEMPORALITIES OF REALITY

Editing in documentary filmmaking is the stage at which the directors and editors construct or invent the story. In a sense, the editor together with the director have the role of the scriptwriter. They write the story from scratch, once they have seen and re-watched the footage and tried out ways in which they can narrate the reality captured by the camera. They work both on the overall structure of the narrative and the details of each scene. As Eva Stefani says, in observational documentaries, editing does not aim at an emotional climax, but at the low-key telling of a story whose meaning is derived from the connection of seemingly insignificant actions and situations of a microcosm in a mosaic.<sup>28</sup> The programme's documentaries are not based on a dramatic story with strong identification with specific characters and a plot revolving around the achievement of a goal. While they have a simple and understandable organization and structure, the documentaries as a whole present narratives that artistically reveal to us both the community's life with the sea and the playful relationships that the elderly bathers develop in the thermal waters.

In *Fishermen and Fishing*, the general structure is determined first by the presentation of fishing methods and then by the difficulties that arise, for example, when the weather does not allow fishing in the open sea. However, from the outset, the documentary not only presents

<sup>27</sup> Amy Suzanne Hough, *The Liquid Eye: A Deleuzian Poetics of Water in Film*, PhD thesis, University of California, 2019, pp. 31-35, [https://escholarship.org/content/qt4qt0j2xf/qt4qt0j2xf\\_noSplash\\_4fc78cbedbd933d30ba64d7b7a7ced0f.pdf](https://escholarship.org/content/qt4qt0j2xf/qt4qt0j2xf_noSplash_4fc78cbedbd933d30ba64d7b7a7ced0f.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Eva Stefani, *Documentary: The Observation Game*, op.cit., p. 103.

fishing, but also assembles images of women and children in between, such as, for example, the activities of a Sunday, thus weaving a picture of the relationship between the people of the fishing village and the sea. Moreover, in the individual scenes, a balance is always maintained between wide shots, so that the viewer can perceive the spaces, and medium shots and some close-ups that highlight the activities and the people. Also, as mentioned above, there are many tracking shots on board and relatively long duration shots. The editing, by utilizing the aquatic imagery of life at sea, achieves a flowing visual rhythm from sea to land and back to sea, thus composing a narrative of community life. The sound design also contributes to this flowing visual rhythm, in which, for example, sounds of the sea and fishing equipment can be heard in combination with the music of the modernist composer Yorgo Sicilianos.<sup>29</sup> The musical composition is written for guitar, cello, piano, flute and santoor, and includes melodic motifs as well as timbral musical counterpoints to the depicted action. Sicilianos has combined some artful idioms of folk music with more modern musical experimentation in the film's score. The acoustic images of the sound design and musical composition are important components of the documentary's flowing rhythm.

Another element that structures the documentary is the narrator's voice. It is worth noting that when ethnographic documentary filmmaking began to develop after the war, the voice-over style (that is, the part of the extra-diegetic narrative through which the narrator addresses the audience directly without appearing on screen) was criticized because in many cases it dictated to viewers what to see, what to think and what to feel.<sup>30</sup> However, the text of the narration in this documentary, while informing the audience about fishing methods, as mentioned above, has been drawn from the local linguistic idiom thanks to the collaboration of the filmmakers with an island resident (See *The making of the documentaries*, p. 14-15), resulting in a more authentic acoustic image being assembled in the visual shots.

The documentary *Bathers* starts with the sound of the waves of the sea and the image of a sunset. Then we hear the voice of the director, who tells us that her grandmother used to take her to the baths, and we see family archival film, in which she is shown as a child with her grandmother on a beach. Stefani uses voice-over only once in the beginning of the film and in the first person to self-consciously communicate to the viewers her subjective experience, which was the motivation for creating the observational documentary. Then, the narrative is constituted by alternating between images of bathhouses and activities of the elderly in the

spa towns. While the shot in a dark bathhouse, immediately after the archival footage, conveys a watery and mysterious feeling from the start, in the first two sequences Stefani chooses to show the elderly people out of the water. She also seems interested in maintaining a balance in her choice of male and female shots. For example, the scenes of the men's informal assembly are followed by scenes of women either in the mud bath or during the coffee ritual, while the shots of the women in the underground bath and the man saying a rather humorous stereotype (similar to what women say about men) are followed by shots of an elderly man showing old photographs and recounting his memories. Therefore, the editing, with the flow of images in and out of the water, aims to convey to the viewers the physical sensation of the bathing elderly bodies but also the playfulness between them—with flirting, singing and arguing—and a general sense of companionship and community. Towards the end, the touching scene of the farewell and the renewal of the appointment for the next year comes in counterpoint to the previous ones, that is, it is somewhat more melancholic, with the result that the emotional experience and the experiential condition of the joyful company of the bathing elderly people are pieced together through editing. Apart from background music at the beginning and end titles, natural sounds are heard throughout the documentary and Stefani allows the shots to have a relatively long duration and camera movement, thus transmitting a flowing sense of the aquatic environment. By piecing together these flowing shots into a relatively simple structure, she manages to make the playful bathing rituals for the elderly intuitively visible.

<sup>29</sup> See Valia Christopoulou, *Yorgo Sicilianos*, Hellenic Music Centre, [https://hellenicmusiccentre.com/index.php?id\\_category=40&controller=category&id\\_lang=1](https://hellenicmusiccentre.com/index.php?id_category=40&controller=category&id_lang=1)

<sup>30</sup> Eva Stefani, *Documentary: The Observation Game*, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

## ANALYSES FISHERMEN AND FISHING

### ANALYSIS OF A FRAME

Back to Port  
(Chapter 9, 17:36)

#### DESCRIPTION

This frame is from a 10-second shot, the first of a sequence towards the end of the film that refers to the fishing doldrums and the fact that sometimes the fishermen do not return with a good catch.

Like all cinematic images, this particular frame is defined by the rectangular boundaries of the screen. On the left, a building can be seen, which dominates part of the left edge, except for a patch of sky in the upper left corner. At the bottom of the image, we see the sea and perceive its texture through the slight ripples and reflections. We can also see the pier. In the background, hills and mountains can be seen and at the top of the image, the sky with faint clouds. From left to right, a man can be seen walking towards the edge of the pier. The movement in the image begins from right to left, where the boat enters, heading towards the pier, guided by the man standing at the bow. We get the sense that the boat will cover the space up to the pier, returning to the harbour.

#### ANALYSIS

By analysing the visual composition of the frame, we can ask whether it tells a story—that is, how a single frame as a moment can represent the central idea of the documentary. For Henri Cartier-Bresson, considered one of the most important photographers of the 20th century, the “decisive moment” is captured when a photograph “is [...] the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organization of forms which give that event its proper expression.”<sup>31</sup>

This particular frame is geometrically coherently organised. The visual information is arranged by the vertical shape of the building and the horizontal shape of the pier from the left, by the slight folds of the serene sea from the base of the image to the horizon point, and by the static volumes of the mountains in the background and the bright sky that occupies the upper part of the image. The level on which the horizon is placed, as well as the gradation of grey tones used, constitute a balanced geometric composition that welcomes the horizontal dynamics



of movement in the two thirds of the image:<sup>32</sup> the boat and the movement of the people who will meet at the decisive moment of the return to the harbour. The visual composition of the frame refers to one of the main narrative elements of the documentary: the return to the port after fishing, and the meeting of the fishermen with their fellow villagers to share the catch.

### ANALYSIS OF A SHOT

A girl: The face of the place  
(Chapter 2, 02:53 - 03:07)

#### DESCRIPTION

This is the last shot from the opening scene of the documentary. In the shot, we see a little girl walking down a stepped cobblestone path. The camera remains stationary, but moves on its axis to follow the girl as she descends the steps and approaches the camera. It is thus stated from the outset that this is not a documentary solely about fishing, but also about community life.

<sup>31</sup> Henri Cartier-Bresson, *The Decisive Moment*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1952.

<sup>32</sup> For the rule of thirds, see Yannis Skopeteas, *Camera, Light and Image in the Digital Audiovisual Recording*, Ion, Athens, 2017, pp. 246-247.



### ANALYSIS

The shot starts as a wide shot, gradually becomes a medium shot and ends up in a close-up, accompanied by musical sounds that sound like jingles. The change of the shot from wide to medium to a close-up is determined by the movement of the girl in space in relation to the movement of the camera from its fixed point. At the beginning of the shot, when it is wide and the camera position is low and recording from bottom to top, we see the girl moving sideways from the top left corner of the screen to the centre of the screen. This wide version of the shot conveys to the viewers a clear sense of orientation in terms of the levelled cobblestone space and the girl's movements. We can see that as she descends, she is holding her dress, presumably to prevent the wind from lifting it, and that she has something in her other hand, on the side that we cannot see. Then, as she continues to descend, the shot, with the movement of the camera, becomes a medium shot, the girl is filmed in a frontal angle. The medium version of the shot reveals the girl's face, and if we observe carefully, we see that she is sticking out her tongue. By revealing the face, the medium shot potentially evokes emotional reactions, as it allows us to get a closer look at the movement of the girl's body. While we see the girl, we simultaneously feel that she might fall or be blown away, an unspecified danger... As the girl walks past the camera, the shot becomes a close-up. Then the camera's position is up high, looking from top to bottom, ending in a close-up by focusing and revealing that the girl is holding a loaf of bread and a book. The musical sounds make us think that she may possibly be going to school and generally have a cheerful tone.

The shot achieves a smooth and affective image, as together with the movement of the child and the movement of the camera, it exploits, firstly, the shift from a wide to a medium and close-up shot, and secondly, the geometric development and the dynamics of the diagonals as defined by the slope and the structure of the steps on the cobbled street. It is a shot of a child, but her image does not reappear in the whole film. The documentary does not intend to introduce specific human characters and create emotion through their personal stories. The shot of the girl is a fleeting image which, along with other images of men, women and children, is part of the composition of an objective yet creative cinematic portrait of the place.

## ANALYSIS OF A SEQUENCE

### Fishing in the dark

(Chapter 4, 04:44 - 09:33)

### DESCRIPTION

While other types of fishing are described more briefly, this particular sequence (with four scenes and a total of forty-two shots), which depicts night fishing with trawlers, is relatively longer than the others and of central importance. The documentary here makes use of the interplay of light and darkness and, through editing, describes, in less than five minutes, the life of the fishermen, the period from afternoon to the dawn of the next day. Throughout the sequence, we hear sounds of the sea and fishing boats as well as musical melodies and sounds.

The first scene with the preparation of the trawlers consists of ten shots, in which a ratio of close-ups, medium shots and wide shots is followed. The medium and close-up shots of the men pushing the boat, taken from the sea, are followed by a wide shot, this time taken from

the beach. The acoustic image is that of the boat being dragged and then entering the water. Also, the wide shot, where we see the pier with the boats and in the foreground and centre of the image a fishing lamp, while we hear some rather melancholic guitar playing, is followed by a medium close-up, shot from top to bottom, of a man checking the fishing lamp. The shot gives an unusual view of the face, as it is not shown as usual from the front or side, but from top to bottom, as if it were lying on the surface of the sea.

The second scene of the boys fishing in the dark consists of four shots, in which only the sound of the sea waves and the wind can be heard. In each shot, the camera, with a low angle of view, is set up in a fixed point, probably on the rocks of the beach. The cinematographer here exploits the technique of contrasting light and darkness (*chiaroscuro*). The first shot of the scene is wide and at a straight angle. It is gradually introduced by a perfectly black image. The horizon of the shot is semi-illuminated putting an emphasis on the spots of light that come from the flaming torches held by the boys. In the second shot, as the camera looks up from below at the face of a boy, it gives the sense that the other human figures are moving through the air. The third shot is a medium shot, and follows another boy fully capturing this way of fishing. The fourth shot is wide, and works as a complementary shot to the intro-





ductory shot. In fact, the first and last shots are from the same take. However, in the editing process, the part of the shot that comes first was placed as the final shot, and respectively, the part of the shot that follows was used as the introductory shot of the scene.

The third scene, the night fishing with the trawlers, consists of sixteen shots. The first four are wide and medium shots, in which the trawlers with the fishing lamps are seen stretching out to sea. There are sounds of the sea and of fishing equipment as well as a musical sound of an agonizing quality combined with slow bass notes of cello and piano. The camera in some of these shots moves following the floating course of the trawlers. The next ten wide and medium shots focus on the main trawler from which the fishermen cast their nets and collect the fish, while the medium and close-up shots focus on the fishing equipment and the men whose expressions reflect the many difficulties of the profession. The last two shots, with the boats returning before dawn are tracking shots in motion. In this scene, too, there is a ratio of wide, medium and close-up shots, in order to convey the whole process of fishing. What makes this particular scene so striking is the darkness that prevails, which is emphasized because the contrast of light from the fishing lamps is being used photographically.

The last scene, which consists of twelve shots, is filmed, unlike the previous one, in the abundant morning light. The music here becomes more lively with higher notes of cello, piano, guitar and flute, and more folkloric and melodic with the introduction of tunes from a santoor, which is one of the traditional instruments of Lesvos. The scene begins with the image of a barbecue where the fish are being prepared for the meal after the overnight fishing. Then the shot opens to a wide shot of the men in the eating session as well as of some cats “taking advantage.” This is followed by three wide and medium shots of the harbour area, as well as of the men, some resting and others sharing the food. In the next five—medium and medium/close-up—shots the camera moves closer to the faces and focuses on the gestures, a shot of a dog is interspersed, and the narrative again seeks to emphasize the toil of the people. The scene concludes with a wide shot of the harbour. Here too, with the wide, medium and close-up shots, the harbour, one of the gathering places of the villagers, is captured. In this scene, however, the camera gets a little closer, with bright medium/close-up and close-up shots focusing on the faces of the fishermen and capturing their fatigue.





### ANALYSIS

The analysis of the sequence takes into account both how each scene has been edited individually, and how the individual scenes are combined. First of all, from the above descriptions it is clear that almost every scene adheres to a ratio of wide, medium and close-up shots in order to show the space and also to get closer to the activity and the people performing it. It should be noted that extreme close-ups are avoided, as the documentary wants to have a primarily detached and, as far as possible, objective style. However, filming in the dark in the middle scenes does give a more dramatic tone.

As for the relationship between the scenes, the first one was filmed in afternoon light and the last one in morning light, while the two middle ones were filmed in darkness. In the two night scenes using the technique of contrasting light and darkness, the forms of the composition are not delineated by a contour of the environment but are distinguished through the juxtaposition of light and dark surfaces. The light is not simply diffused into the space but it is the light itself that creates the space and that highlights the faces and activities. Reality is thus dramatically transformed into a play of light.

The scene with the boys and the torches creates an eerie atmosphere. As the reality of the boys is transformed by the filming, we are invited to discern their faces in the torchlight. We would say that this is both an image of reality, but also a new one that emerges, the reality of the image. It is a dramaturgy of the real, in which additional aesthetic and sensory dimensions of the activity are revealed. Moreover, this particular scene dramatically functions as a prologue to the development of the sequence and strengthens the next scene, that of the night fishing with the trawlers, which is more descriptive.

If we observe the way in which this particular sequence develops, we can understand the creative expression through editing. Editing helps to express in a perceptible way the process of fishing, from dusk to dawn, but also the creative and aesthetic treatment of this process, with the play of light and darkness and the shots of the fishermen's faces in the morning light.

It should be noted, however, that components of this creative processing are also sound images. In the middle night scenes, mostly in the second scene with the boys, there is a musical pause and only the sea and the wind can be heard, possibly contributing to the dramatic tone of the scene. In the third scene with the night fishing, the low notes and the anguished musical sound add to the sense of the difficulties and effort involved in this type of fishing. Also, in the first scene, the guitars have a more melancholic timbre, while in the last scene, the music is more lively and with an artful and local idiom, marking the relaxation from the all-night fishing and reuniting at the harbour, the public space of the community. Moreover, the narration, which in the first three scenes is more descriptive of the activities, in the last scene, prompts us to see the sorrows and toil that speak across the hollowed faces of the resting fishermen.

## ANALYSES BATHERS

### ANALYSIS OF A FRAME

Surrounded by sea  
(Chapter 3, 27:49)

#### DESCRIPTION

This frame is from a shot of only six seconds, the first in the third sequence of the film. The sequence, entitled “The Parliament,” introduces us to the informal assemblies of the bathers in Edipsos. In the frame we see a seascape. It is a wide shot, without camera movement, where the sea takes up about two-thirds of the whole in the first level of the image. In the sea, we can see bathers and the wrinkles in the sea surface created by their slow movements in the water. In the upper part of the image, the way the camera focuses on the horizon works harmoniously in rendering the stillness of the water, while the visual centre of the image itself acts as a clearing in relation to the edges of the image.

#### ANALYSIS

The frame, through a simple and clear visual composition, combines geometric abstraction, i.e. a composition of bathers in shapes and lines, with the open perspective of the seascape. In this frame, we have both a static and a moving landscape, on the one hand, calm and stillness, on the other hand, a gentle mobility and latent changing atmosphere from the calm sea and the hint of changing light on the open horizon. The heads of the bathers can be seen as small points in the picture, since their bodies are in the sea. This frame serves as a basis to show that the bathers are surrounded by the sea and that, despite their playful bickering in the subsequent shots, the overall calm and therapeutic liquid element pervades all the framing of the characters in the documentary. In other words, the filmmaker establishes that the documentary’s space will be the fluid space of water.

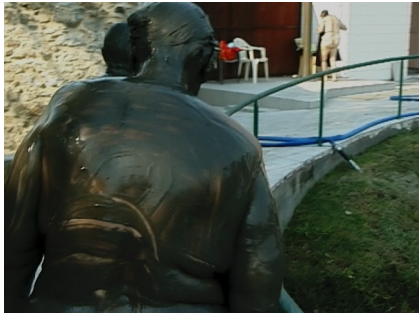


### ANALYSIS OF A SHOT

Portraying joy  
(Chapter 6, 39:09 - 39:44)

#### DESCRIPTION

This particular shot is the opening shot of the sequence, in which what we might call the ‘joy of the mud bath’ is described. It is a hand-held camera shot that starts from a medium shot and ends in a close-up. At the beginning, we see the back of a figure covered in mud in the centre of the frame, while we hear a female voice singing a children’s tune. The camera catches up with the figure from the side as she turns her head towards the background of the frame. Immediately afterwards she turns towards the camera so we see the woman’s mud-covered face, from which her laughing eyes and wide smile stand out. All around we see other presences and bodies covered with mud in the area of the premises on the right side of the picture. Towards the end of the shot, at about the same close proximity to the lens, the woman addresses the camera and exclaims: “Good stuff, kiddo, nudity!”



### ANALYSIS

Stefani starts here with the image of a body, and, even more, of a face, to introduce the mud bath scene. With a normal close-up lens and camera in hand, the choice to begin with a portrait of the joy of the mud bath expressed by this woman, signals that her way of observing is anything but detached or distant. The point of departure is not the space but the experience of the people within it. The movement of the body with the movement of the camera creates a visual juxtaposition of axes and directions, while the presence of other bodies in the background reinforces the composition. Ultimately, it is a harmonious blend between the rhythm given by the woman and the rhythm followed by the camera. The cinematic image thus functions primarily as a lived experience through the filmmaker's gaze, which is transmitted to the viewers' gaze.

Moreover, in this game of observation, with the alertness of the camera, the intimacy that has developed between the filmmaker and the joyful woman is revealed. Such an approach cannot be taken when the camera is used as a cold medium of recording, but only when it is used as a means in the formation of warm, personal relationships between the filmmaker and the filmed subjects. Moreover, the bather's song perhaps expresses the search for a childishness without conventions, and her words the glorification of the naked body.

The naked bodies and faces depicted, however, are covered with mud. So they are not exactly naked. Here, the dimension of corporeality is given by the complete covering of the naked body with thermal mud and alludes to the sculptural/plastic arts. The plasticity of a visual form is a necessary condition in a work of art through which movement is produced. And movement, in turn, is essential since it is through it that reference and relationship with life come to be. The key concept in the analysis of this shot concerns transformation. The gaze of the cinematographer transforms the obvious and the immediate into something different, into something else, which hints at the plasticity of the visual arts and through it offers the lived experience of the joy of the mud bath. It thus refutes the view that conceives of observation as synonymous with objectivity. It is much more about the creative processing of reality in order to visually and acoustically transmit a lived experience.

## ANALYSIS OF A SEQUENCE

### The bathing camera

(Chapter 5, 32:56 - 37:45)

### DESCRIPTION

The sequence is titled “Morning Bath” and mainly shows bathers in a dark and underground bathhouse enjoying the water, singing and sometimes addressing the camera. It also includes scenes of the bathers coming and going to and from the lakeside facility by boat. The sequence has three scenes and a total of twenty-one shots.

The first scene is the going to the bathhouse and consists of seven shots. While the first wide shot gives a sense of the lakescape, the camera follows in close-up a woman who responds to the cameraperson with a song. After some shots of the elderly people boarding the boat, there follows an on-board sideways tracking shot, then a shot of the inside of the boat and

the group of bathers, and finally another on-board but frontal tracking shot that shows the destination. In this scene, the wide and medium shots give a sense of the boat ride and the tracking shots give a sense of the sailing. Also, with the close-up of the woman singing, a sense of relaxation and ease is conveyed.

The second scene depicts the bath itself and consists of twelve shots. The first three show the entrance to the room. In one of them, a woman waves to the camera, while in the middle shot two women descending towards the water are performing the sign of the cross. Then follows, a wide shot that establishes the perception of the bathhouse space, shot from top to bottom, presumably from a low angle on the staircase. In subsequent shots, the filmmaker is obviously in the water and the camera takes a close-up of a woman talking while looking at the lens, another smiling and a third singing. In the shot of the woman singing, the same earlier wide shot of the bath is intercut. Then a man, whose face is side-lit, tells a stereotypical joke focusing on the female gender. The final shot of the scene is a wide shot taken from the side of the bathhouse facing the stairs, shot almost from the water level and shot against the light. It is significant that the opening shot of the documentary is similar to this last shot of the sequence.





The last scene of the sequence, which consists of two shots, is the return to the bathers' accommodation by boat. The first begins with a medium close-up of a man looking head-on at the camera while holding binoculars. Then, as he hands the binoculars to a younger man, the shot becomes a close-up of his left profile. Finally, as the latter turns his head to the right, the camera moves to show the banks of the lake that the young man is looking at. Here, the change of shot with the camera moving from a close-up to the faces to a wide shot of the shore is combined with the on-board tracking camera movement. The final shot shows a couple disembarking from the boat and follows them up to a point in their return to the facilities.

### ANALYSIS

It is worth noting that the central scene of this sequence in the dark bath is foreshadowed in the opening shot of the film in the opening credits and its significance for the documentary as a whole is thus stated from the outset. Throughout the sequence, Stefani assembles the images in a comprehensible way so that the viewers perceive a spatio-temporal unity. She uses the boat ride to and from the thermal bath in the sunlight, only to emphasize the healing ritual in the underground dark bath. In the first scene, in addition to the sense of transition, there is also a sense of the bathers' euphoria conveyed by the woman singing to the camera. In the return scene, in the long tracking shot where the bathers look through the binoculars, first frontally towards the camera and then towards the lake shore, Stefani implies that the game of filming is about the filmmaker observing the filmed persons, but conversely, it is also about them observing her. In a sense, the bathers, along with the filmmaker, are playmates in the game of this observational documentary.

This mutual play is evident in the central scene in the dark bath, where already in the first shot a woman greets the camera, but also plays herself. After the wide and medium shots of the space and the transition to the underground bath, the documentarist with the camera in her hand is also a bather and interacts with the other bathers who observe and address her. Stefani is filming in a semi-lit area, shooting at an angle from the water level, with frontal light to the camera and a limited sharpness of recording in the image. She achieves this because she has spent time with them, she has also given them time to observe her as well, and consequently a mutual appreciation has been built from their interaction. So, it seems here, as in the mud baths, that the filmed subjects have an active role in the dramaturgy of the documentary. Stefani, in a two-way observation, during the ritual of the bath, uses the camera as a catalyst and dives into levels of reality deeper than they appear.

The filming environment, the underground dark bath, is a special space that acquires a symbolic character. There is an element of descent and ritual process. The bathers descend a staircase to a semi-lit area and some even make their cross before entering the thermal water. In all cultures and mythologies, water is the ultimate source of life that heals, renews and ensures longevity. The bath symbolizes purification and has a cleansing character. Ritual healing practices include the descent to springs, which symbolically refers to the descent into the depths of the earth from which one can draw new rejuvenating powers. The camera films and interacts with the subjects in the dark thermal bath. It thus allows us to get to know aspects of people's behaviour that would not be expressed in different environments. In this thermal water space, the elderly people, in addition to the therapeutic properties of the water, also enjoy the socialization. In this way, the documentary captures both the ritual of bathing and the small rituals of sociability that the elderly perform to rejuvenate themselves, flirting, laughing and singing.



# IV – CONNECTIONS

## 1. REFLECTED IN IMAGERY

- 1 – *Fishermen and Fishing* (1961), Leon Loisis
- 2 – *Peacock of the Sea* (1939), Leo Matiz
- 3 – *Bathers* (2008), Eva Stefani
- 4 – *Bathers at Asnières* (1884), Georges Pierre Seurat



1



2



3



4



## 2. DIALOGUES BETWEEN FILMS

There are many interesting connections, both in terms of image themes and of cinematic techniques, between the Greek Ethnographic Documentaries programme and other programmes and films in the CinEd collection, as well as other fiction and documentary films from the history of cinema, which either incorporate elements of reality into their fictions,<sup>33</sup> or use the image of water creatively.

### CINEMA OF THE REAL

#### “THE CINEMA OF ORIGINS”

One connection is with “The Cinema of Origins” programme from the CinEd collection, and in particular with the “Lumière Views” and “Outdoor Scenes,” which were, in essence, short documentaries, since these early filmmakers shot scenes of everyday life. The recording of reality is a trend that can be found in the early days of cinema, alongside the tendency to create unreal and fantastic worlds. The cinema was used from very early on because it made it possible to record the phenomena of the world and to capture “the extraordinary in the ordinary,” as Jean-Luc Godard said.<sup>34</sup>

In some of the “Lumière Views,” the filmed environments are aquatic, where adults and children engage in water-related activities such as boating, fishing or swimming, as in Greek Ethnographic Documentaries. In the Greek documentaries, many of the tracking shots are taken on board boats. It is worth noting here that one of the first tracking shots in the history of cinema, i.e. a shot with the camera moving in space, was taken by Alexandre Promio from a gondola in Venice between 1895 and 1900. Gabriel Veyre’s film *Namo Village: Panorama Taken from a Rickshaw*, made in 1900, about a traditional community in Vietnam, which also has a tracking shot, can be considered an early ethnographic documentary. The same can be said of *Gypsy Life* for a nomadic community, produced by the Pathé company.



*Boat Leaving the Port*  
(1895-1900),  
Lumière Views



*The Sea* (1895-1900),  
Lumière Views



*Kids Fishing Shrimps*  
(1895-1900),  
Lumière Views



*Panorama of the Grand Canal Taken from a Boat*  
(1895-1900), Lumière Views



*Namo Village: Panorama Taken from a Rickshaw*  
(1895-1900), Lumière Views



*Gypsy Life* (1908),  
a Pathé France production



*Bathers* (2008),  
Eva Stefani

<sup>33</sup> For an exploration of the relationship between reality and fiction, see Le Cinéma, cent ans de jeunesse, *Reality in Fiction*, <https://www.cinemacentansdejeunesse.org/en/resources/all-the-questions/reality-in-fiction.html>

<sup>34</sup> In Michaël Dacheux, *The Cinema of Origins*, op. cit., p. 27.

### NANOOK OF THE NORTH AND MAN OF ARAN

The 1922 documentary *Nanook of the North* is a landmark in the history of documentary film-making. In it, the American Robert Flaherty spent time getting intimate with an Eskimo Inuit family and then asked them to recreate recently extinct ways of life, such as igloo making or hunting and fishing methods. Also, in a later documentary (1934), entitled *Man of Aran*, Flaherty records and narrates the life of a family in a poor island village in Ireland.



*Nanook of the North* (1922),  
Robert Flaherty



*Fishermen and Fishing*  
(1961), Leon Loisos



*Man of Aran* (1934),  
Robert Flaherty

### DRIFTERS

John Grierson was a leading figure in the *British social documentary movement*. His 1929 film *Drifters* seems to have influenced Loisos, who in his documentary *Fishermen and Fishing*, masterfully balances the recording and creative treatment of the reality of the depicted fishing village.<sup>35</sup>



*Drifters* (1929),  
John Grierson



*Fishermen and Fishing*  
(1961), Leon Loisos

### ITALIAN NEOREALISM

The Italian Neorealism movement, which drew on that genre of cinema that is at the intersection of documentary and fiction, had a significant impact on ethnographic documentary. By filming fishing communities in Sicily, directors Luchino Visconti in *The Earth Trembles* (1948) and Roberto Rossellini in *Stromboli* (1950) directed their neorealist dramas. In the film *The Earth Trembles*, poor fishermen are deceived by fish merchants. One of the families tries to escape exploitation and become independent. The film *Stromboli*, narrates the story of a woman who feels marginalized by the fishing families of the volcanic island of the same name.



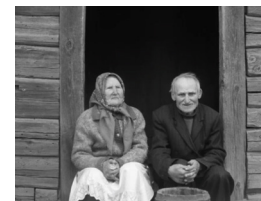
*The Earth Trembles* (1948),  
Luchino Visconti



*Stromboli* (1950),  
Roberto Rossellini

### “PROGRAMME OF LITHUANIAN DOCUMENTARIES”

Robertas Verba's documentary *Dreams of Centenarians* (1969) from the “Programme of Lithuanian Documentaries” in CinEd's collection seems to be linked to *Bathers*, as both showcase an unconventional and sometimes comic representation of the elderly. While Verba juxtaposes images of children and the elderly in his montage in order to show the cycle of life, Stefani chooses to show the small gestures of joy and teasing of the elderly that make them look like children. But *Dreams of Centenarians* is also connected to *Fishermen and Fishing*, in terms of representing a small traditional community, far from the modernized cities of the 1960s era. Also, Henrikas Šablevičius' *A Trip Across Misty Meadows* (1973), like *Fishermen and Fishing*, depict professions that have become extinct, each in its own poetic way.



*Dreams of Centenarians* (1969), Robertas Verba

<sup>35</sup> Archival material of the Greek Film Archive, unpublished programme of the Cinema Club, n.d.

## FILMING THE WATER / SYMBOLISMS OF WATER

Water, an element of nature in constant motion, is a recurring motif in cinema. Since its beginnings, cinema has demonstrated that water can give audiovisual substance and meaning to human desires, dreams and secrets. The filming of water is interesting from a formalist point of view for its visual properties, for example, movement, depth, transparency. The choice of water as a backdrop in many films is functional for creating immersive cinematic experiences. With aquatic environments, filmmakers can play with contrasts such as light/dark, deep/surface, overt/hidden, presence/reflection. Besides, since ancient times, water has had various symbolism, as it was considered the source of life and the culprit of cataclysmic destruction, while in modern times water can be a symbol of “passage” to different or imaginary worlds. Inevitably, therefore, the appearance of water on the screen evokes a whole range of possible symbolisms for viewers.

### THE FIRST STONE IN MY POCKET

Joaquim Pinto’s Portuguese film *The First Stone in my Pocket* (1987) from the CinEd collection is fiction—but it has a documentary approach. The coming-of-age story of the young protagonist takes place in a fishing village in Portugal in the late 1980s. There are many scenes in the film that capture the fishing community, fishing traditions and the legends and stories told, as in the documentary *Fishermen and Fishing*, made twenty years earlier. Both communities depicted in these films followed the same path: they became tourist areas.



*The First Stone in my Pocket*  
(1987), Joaquim Pinto

### BACK TO SCHOOL / A LITTLE LIGHT

In Jacques Rozier’s short film *Back to School* (1955) from the CinEd collection, a young student runs away from school and wanders down the river. At one point, while floating on the water, the splendour of nature is revealed to him. Instead of the school curriculum, what he learns that day is the awareness of his senses from his reflection on nature. Baptism in water is the element that facilitated this sensory awareness, as it does for the elderly bathers who, joking, sometimes in an erotic mood, get ‘rebaptized’ in the thermal waters. Interestingly, in the other short film in the programme, *A Little Light* (2002) by Alain Gomis, in which young Fatima in Dakar, Senegal, discovers the world through her senses, the water element, although it does not appear, is present in her imagination. At the end of the film, the little girl in front of the ocean is overwhelmed by the sea breeze.



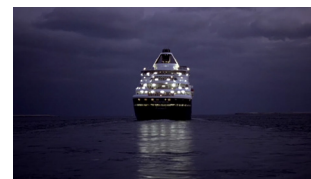
*Back to School* (1955),  
Jacques Rozier



*A Little Light* (2002),  
Alain Gomis

### THE WAY I SPENT THE END OF THE WORLD

In Cătălin Mitulescu’s Romanian film *The Way I Spent the End of the World* (2005) from the CinEd collection, set in 1989, shortly before the fall of the communist regime in the country, the young heroes have to swim in the Danube River to escape from the Ceausescu regime. The river is thus a physical as well as symbolic border between the world they want to escape from and the world they want to take refuge in. The motif of the sea journey also appears in the film, foreshadowing the finale, in which the heroine travels the world by sea.



*The Way I Spent the End of the World* (2005), Cătălin Mitulescu

**PIERROT LE FOU**

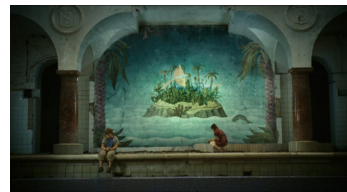
In Jean-Luc Godard's French film *Pierrot le Fou* (1965) from the CinEd collection, the wandering lovers eventually throw the car in the sea and isolate themselves in a seaside location, turning their backs on consumer culture as modern-day Robinson Crusoes.



*Pierrot le Fou* (1965), Jean-Luc Godard

**BLUE TIGER**

In Petr Oukropec's Czech film *Blue Tiger* (2012) from the CinEd collection, which combines animation with live action, Prague's old public baths are an important site for the film's narrative. There, the young protagonist Johanka will see her visions for the first time, and from there, at the end of the film, the family will escape on rafts to the island where the blue tiger has taken refuge.



*Blue Tiger* (2012), Petr Oukropec

**INTO THE BLUE**

In Antoneta Alamat's Croatian short film *Into the Blue* (2017), set on a sunny island off the Adriatic coast, the teenage protagonist tries to heal the wounds of her abusive family environment by diving or floating in the sea.

In this film as well as in others mentioned above, the characters reach an existential dead end but there is no way back. Escapes through water symbolize new beginnings. After all, crossing to a new shore has been associated in mythology and in biblical texts with the uprooting and crossing necessary for transformation or a new life.



*Into the Blue* (2017), Antoneta Alamat

**HONEYMOON**

In the context of New Greek Cinema, the fiction film with elements of black comedy *Honeymoon* (1979) by Giorgos Panousopoulos was filmed in the spa town of Kaiafas, where Stefani also filmed parts of *Bathers*. The story revolves around an elderly couple visiting the baths once again and meeting with their friends. To the husband, who has just received his pension, the future looks bleak and in a moment of madness he kills his wife. Panousopoulos also gives a playful representation of old age, and uses the fluid element to alternate narratively between the memories and desires, and the present of his protagonists, between the imaginary and the real.



*Honeymoon* (1979),  
Giorgos Panousopoulos

### 3. BRIDGES WITH OTHER ART FORMS

#### PREHISTORIC AND ANCIENT GREEK ART

In the Aegean Sea and particularly in the Cycladic islands, a very important civilization, known as the Cycladic Civilization (3rd and 2nd millennium BC) developed. The Cycladic people, a seafaring people, linked their lives to the sea and developed trade relations with Egypt, Asia Minor, Minoan Crete and the Mycenaean cities of central and southern Greece. The *Fisherman* fresco (circa 1650 BC) found at Akrotiri on Thera depicts a young fisherman holding fish in both hands.

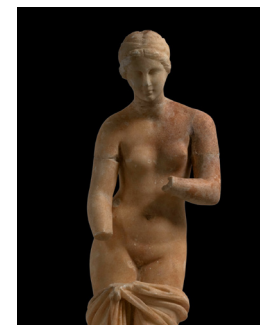


*Fisherman* (circa 1650 BC)

According to the archaeologist Mimika Giannopoulou,<sup>36</sup> “In cosmological myths, and also in pre-Socratic philosophy, the element of water lies at the beginning and end of every cosmic event. Water assumes a multitude of symbolisms connected with the birth and rebirth of life, the fertility it ensures for Mother Earth, the cleansing and purification of mortals and immortals alike. The concept of bathing in its ritual sense precedes divine hierogamies, the sacred marriages of the gods, and is an integral element of the worship of male and especially female deities. Even the first marriage, that of Father Uranus, the Sky, with the Great Mother Earth, takes place during a storm [...].”

It is from water, seawater in fact, that the myth has Aphrodite emerge at Cythera or Cyprus. It is there, according to Homer’s description, that the Horae and the Graces bathe her and anoint her and clothe her, before delivering her to Zephyrus, who is to present her to the gods of Olympus (Homer, *Odyssey*, 8.364). The moment before or after Aphrodite’s bath, with the goddess in a nude or semi-naked pose, will be immortalised for centuries in works of art. [...]

The goddess is celebrated as the perfect model of the beauty and desire that determine human affairs in both their highest and their most mundane expression. A semi-naked version in the *Venus pudica* (modest Venus) type is depicted in the marble statuette from Chania dated to the 2nd c. BC. Statuettes of this type were offered by worshippers at sanctuaries or placed in homes, public buildings, fountains and groves as eloquent symbols of all that the goddess represented in the world of gods and men.”



Marble statuette of Aphrodite (Late 2nd c. BC),  
Archaeological Museum of Chania

In the ancient Greek world and in the period of the Roman Empire that followed, water sources, thermal or not, and baths were important areas of public health and, as the representations in vase-painting testify, were particularly popular. Vessels were used for a variety of purposes, including storage, mixing, cold storage, transport of liquids or foodstuffs, and were decorated with elaborate representations.

<sup>36</sup> Mimika Giannopoulou, “In the beginning was the myth: the baths of the gods” in Eleni Papadopoulou, Chryssa Bourbou, Mimika Giannopoulou, *Bath Time! Body, Water, Dialogues*, Exhibition catalogue, Archaeological Museum of Chania, 2022, p.32. The catalogue in English: [https://amch.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/amch-publications-bath-time\\_en.pdf](https://amch.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/amch-publications-bath-time_en.pdf)

On the vase in the photo, according to the archaeologist Efi Oikonomou, we can see:<sup>37</sup> “On one side of the vase a woman is depicted bathing in an imposing fountain structure. The Greek cities, in response to the ever growing population, met the mounting need for running water by the construction, mainly by tyrants, of buildings of this kind, as a part of aqueducts. In fact, to some fountains that are more closely associated with nymphs have been attributed magical and protective properties. The woman depicted here, comb in hand, has been tending to her long hair, a symbol of femininity and eroticism, like her ample breasts. Young maidens at fountains, carefree and therefore provocative, who fall prey to men, are a commonplace in vase-painting. The removal of the girl’s clothing suggests that she is divested of the protection offered by the home, while the lurking danger is depicted on the other side, where a male warrior lies in wait.”



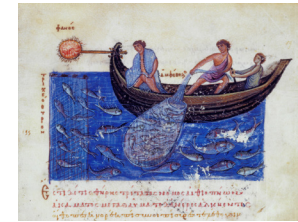
Clay Attic red-figure pelike  
in the style of the Nikoxenos Painter (Late 5th c. BC),  
National Archaeological Museum

#### ICONOGRAPHY

In religious art, the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes by Jesus Christ has often been depicted, as in the mosaic in the Basilica of Sant’Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna (6th century). Also of interest is the representation of fishing with a fishing light from the epic poem *Cynegetica* by Pseudo-Oppian, in the late Byzantine period.<sup>38</sup>



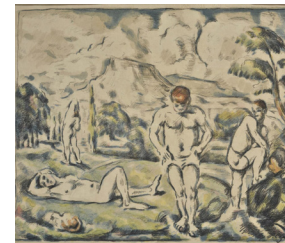
*The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes* (6th century),  
mosaic in the Basilica of Sant’Apollinare, Ravenna



Fishing with a fishing light  
(circa 1060), miniature from  
Pseudo-Oppian’s *Cynegetica*

#### VISUAL ARTS

The Frenchman Paul Cézanne, one of the most important painters of modern art, depicted the subject of bathers and created paintings and a series of drawings, from as early as the 1870s. The artist began his career as an impressionist painter. Thus, his work reflects the influence of this movement’s experimentation with the visual effects of colour. Cézanne, however, was not interested in the atmospheric properties of colour, as the Impressionists were, but instead explored the properties of solidity and space, attempting to render perspective solely through colour. *The Large Bathers* (1898) is considered a landmark piece in the history of art.<sup>39</sup>



*The Bathers* (1896-1898),  
Paul Cézanne



*The Large Bathers* (1898),  
Paul Cézanne

<sup>37</sup> Efi Oikonomou, “4.1. Clay Attic red-figure pelike in the style of the Nikoxenos Painter,” in Eleni Papadopoulou, Chryssa Bourbou, Mimika Giannopoulou, *Bath Time! Body, Water, Dialogues*, op.cit., p. 116.

<sup>38</sup> Manos Koutrakis, Dimitra Mylona, “Fishery and fish processing in Greece from antiquity to the present day,” *Demeter Journal*, Hellenic Agricultural Organization Demeter, 2018, p. 21, [https://www.elgo.gr/images/ioanna/periodiko/Teyxos\\_21/ARTHRO\\_5\\_%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%B1.pdf](https://www.elgo.gr/images/ioanna/periodiko/Teyxos_21/ARTHRO_5_%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%B1.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> Ulrike Becks-Malorny, *Paul Cézanne (1839-1906): Pioneer of Modernism*, Taschen, Cologne, 2001.

Mexican painter Frida Kahlo is best known for her self-portraits, in which she depicted her ailing body and her turbulent life. As a child, Kahlo contracted polio and as a teenager she was seriously injured in a car accident. In *What the Water Gave Me* (1939), she invites us to take a bath with her and look at her life from her subjective viewpoint. As seen in the painting, her bath is a feverish surreal dream of grotesque imagery: The burning Empire State Building rises from a volcano, while a masked man dangles on a beach and strangles a floating naked woman with a string on which mosquitoes and spiders balance.



***What the Water Gave Me* (1939),  
Frida Kahlo**

In the works of the Greek folk painter Theophilos (frescoes, paintings on objects or cloths), the world of the painter, a world of gods, heroes and everyday people, coexisting with elements and images from the familiar reality and landscape of Lesvos, where he came from, is depicted with the freshness of naive painting.<sup>40</sup> The *Gripes Mytilene* painting depicts the communal life of the fishing village.



***Gripes Mytilene* (1928),  
Theophilos**

Also, the Greek engraver Tassos, before devoting himself to the black and white woodcuts that would characterize his personal style, in the 1950s he turned to colour woodcuts, creating subjects from the life of farmers and fishermen.



***Fishermen* (1959), Tassos**



***Fishermen of Aegina*  
(1958), Tassos**

<sup>40</sup> Theophilos (Chatzimichael), National Gallery, <https://www.nationalgallery.gr/en/artist/theophilos-chatzimichael/>

Below you will find some indicative suggestions for teaching the Greek Ethnographic Documentaries programme that take into account the age of the students. However, some of the suggestions could, with appropriate adaptations, be used with all age groups. *Fishermen and Fishing* is suitable for primary school children, while the two documentaries together are suitable for middle and high school children. These suggestions are based on the CinEd pedagogical principles (see p. 2). The general idea is that the documentaries should be approached both in a logical but mostly in a sensory way, that is, starting with what the children observed and thought. The double aim is for the students is to get to know and, as far as possible, to “play” with the documentary films, and at the same time to observe, discuss and interpret the socio-cultural contexts of the documentaries as communicated through the cinematic language.<sup>41</sup> The proposed method involves discussion and/or activities before and after the screening and the aim is not to provide specific answers, but to enhance descriptive, analytical and expressive skills as well as dialogue and collaboration skills. In other words, it is a less cognitive and more exploratory and experiential approach to cinematographic works. For this reason, the following teaching scenarios draw from elements of educational drama.<sup>42</sup>

41 For the cinematic language of documentary film and for a glossary of cinematic terms, see Panagiotis Kyriakoulakos, Evangelos Kalampakas, *The Audio-visual Construction*, Kallipos, Open Academic Editions, 2015, <https://hdl.handle.net/11419/5719>. Frank Eugene Beaver, *Dictionary of Film Terms: The Aesthetic Companion to Film Art*, Peter Lang, New York, 2007.

42 Avra Avdi, Melina Chatzigeorgiou, *The Art of Drama in Education, 48 proposals for theatre education workshops*, Metaixmio, Athens, 2007. Bolton Gavin, *Selected Writings on drama in education*, Longman, London, 1986.

### FISHERMEN AND FISHING

#### AGES 6-8 YEARS

##### BEFORE WATCHING THE FILM

- Facilitate a discussion around the title of the documentary *Fishermen and Fishing* and ask the students what they understand from the title. We could ask them, for example, what the word fishermen means for their region or country (in case they come from a country other than Greece). Then we ask them what they think a documentary is, and we can give them some introductory information about the documentary that they are going to watch, for example, any facts about life in a fishing village of past times.
- After watching one or two clips of the documentary, the students are encouraged to describe what they saw. They are also asked what might be the story that they are going to watch.
- The sounds of the film: The class listens to a short clip from the documentary (e.g. 01:07-01:23, 09:30-09:45, 17:20-17:35). Initially without prompting and then, if necessary, with guidance, encourage students to describe what they heard. The sounds of the sea? An engine? Birds squawking? What kind of birds might they be? What other sounds? Based on the sounds they heard they are asked what they think the film might be about?

##### AFTER WATCHING THE FILM

- Coordinate a discussion with the students about what they saw in the film. What is the story? How does it begin? What happens in the story? Who are the characters? What do they remember? What took them by surprise? What did they not understand? What did they like best? What is the main theme of the film?

- In groups, indicatively of three to five people, they are asked to jointly make a drawing that represents a part of the village area depicted in the documentary. They then place the pictures they have drawn on a large sheet of white paper with the indicative general title “Once upon a time...” or a different title of their choice.
- In groups, the students are asked to produce sounds that match some of the printed stills from the film. The sound could be a speech, a melody, a song or a noise.
- The students in groups form a group sculpture with their bodies, a picture on the subject of *Fishermen and Fishing*.

#### AGES 9-12 YEARS

##### BEFORE WATCHING THE FILM

- Students watch stills from other films in the CinEd collection (see Connections, p. 32-36) and from *Fishermen and Fishing* and are encouraged to describe and compare what they see and what they observe. What is common to all of them and what is different? What do the stills from the films bring to mind?
- Lead a discussion about whether they know what a documentary is and how it differs from fiction. What documentary films have they had the opportunity to watch? What were they interested in? What did they like? What made an impression on them, either positive or negative?
- Moderate a discussion about what they think life is like in a village, near the sea, on an island. How do they imagine the everyday life of the inhabitants? What occupations might there be? What might this everyday life have been like in the 1960s?



### AFTER WATCHING THE FILM

- Based on a printed still from the documentary, encourage groups of students to draw something they imagined to be out of frame, to the left or right or above and below the image. They then place the drawings on a large piece of cardboard as a collage with the indicative title “Tranquil wave of life” (a line heard in the film narration).
- The students in groups are asked to make a frozen image, with their bodies, with the theme, for example, “All this effort for half a basket of fish” or “Brotherhood born out of their common labour,” (lines heard in the film narration), and to invent a title for their picture. They can draw inspiration from the different types of fishing shown in the film and use them. They are then encouraged to add movement to the frozen images and then they could also add a word to the moving picture, e.g. what they believe each character is thinking.
- We give students printed pictures of the faces from the film. In groups, they choose a picture and are asked to write down the thoughts and feelings of the person pictured. You can also have students act out a scene and have them take a video while they play, add background music and narration and compare the result to the original scene.

### FISHERMEN AND FISHING / BATHERS

AGES 13-15 YEARS

#### BEFORE WATCHING THE PROGRAMME

- We give the students to observe some stills from the films *Fishermen and Fishing* and *Bathers*. The aim is to start a discussion about what could be the basic theme of the films and what is it that, in their view, integrates the films into a common programme?
- We coordinate a discussion around the subject and context of the films’ creation, about life in a traditional Greek fishing village in the north-eastern Aegean in the early 1960s, or if they know what thermal baths and spa towns might be.
- Show students a series of photographs of the characters from the films *Fishermen and Fishing* and *Bathers* and lead a discussion about: What do they see? What do they notice in the faces? What feelings could the characters be experiencing? What similarities and differences do they have? What is in the foreground and what is in the background? From these characters, can they imagine what the story might be? We let them know that these are documentaries in which there are no actors.

#### AFTER WATCHING THE PROGRAMME

- Lead a discussion with the students about: What did they see? What impressed them? How do they feel? Who, in their opinion, could be the main protagonist in both films? How can we tell that these are not professional actors? Could some of them be imaginary characters? What could be the associations between these films?
- We show them some individual frames, shots, scenes or sequences and ask them to observe and describe, for example, what the framing involves (e.g. portrait, wide

shot or landscape), whether and how the camera moves and so on, to guide them in terms of cinematic language (see Analyses, p. 18-31).

- Students in groups select one or more stills from the films and make a poster of the film (painting, collage, photo), which will include important information from the film and give their own logline (the story in one sentence) of the films.
- In *Bathers*, we see the “Little Parliament” of Edipsos, where everyone can take the floor and speak on a topic, as an example of direct democracy, with a strong element of conflict and debate. We give the class a topic for discussion. For example, what is their opinion of older people? Did the film affect their impression of this age group, and how? How are elderly people treated by their family/friendly/social environment? How, in their opinion, should they be treated? Then, form the ‘Little Parliament’ of the class, with a central issue to be voted on: what are the rights and responsibilities of the elderly? The aim is to give the students the opportunity and freedom to examine the issue from different angles, to hear all views, possibly engage in a debate in order to support their opinion with arguments.
- Students in groups are asked to form with their bodies a frozen image, a group sculpture, a virtual representation, unrealistic, on the theme of, for example, “Moments of transformation in the mud baths,” based on *Bathers*. Then the frozen images can move and the children can make a speech, for example about what each character is thinking, or a song in the moving image. The group sculptures can be photographed and a photo exhibition can be held in the classroom.
- Give groups of students ten printed stills from each documentary, and ask them to put them together and tell a story. They can then come up with some short texts, either as a dialogue or as a narrative. Afterwards, they can

add music. The children are then asked to think about what changes with the addition of music. We can also prompt a discussion about what would happen if they change the order of the pictures or remove a picture. This is an opportunity to talk about the role and importance of editing.

#### AGES 16-19 YEARS

##### BEFORE WATCHING THE PROGRAMME

- Lead a discussion on cinema as an art of composition: what are its compositional elements (frame, shot, out-of-field, depth of field, scene, sequence, movement, rhythm, sound, colour, etc.).
- We can ask the students if they have had the opportunity to hear the terms “ethnographic documentary” or “observational documentary.” What could they mean in their opinion?
- We lead a discussion on subject of the body today: What are the standards of beauty nowadays? Is the ageing body accepted by society and to what extent?

##### AFTER WATCHING THE PROGRAMME

- Students in groups are encouraged to focus on creating a portrait of a character that they are interested in in real life. It could be an elderly relative, a close friend, a neighbour in the area. Students can take notes about the person and their environment. They can then carry out photographic portraits and choose five different photographs, in the same setting, by changing the size of the frame (from very close to very far away), or by changing the lighting (brightness, contrast, colour). Next, the

students are encouraged to film the character, creating a short one-and-a-half minute video in two versions, one in black and white and one in colour, with changes in, for example, framing or camera movement. We then show the videos and facilitate a discussion on the following: What do they notice in the black and white video and what in the colour video, does the colour change affect the final result? What do they notice when they change a compositional element?

- Homer’s *Odyssey* is the epic of the sea. Ingenuity, adventure, travel, the geographical element, trials, companionship, invention, and the liquid element characterize this work. We can select a passage from the *Odyssey* and then ask the students in groups to draw and present with their bodies an image or a scene based on this passage, with a non-realistic representation, e.g. they can make the ship schematically with their bodies. Then they can add speech, movement, music and sounds, if they wish.
- We show the class a series of photographs from *Fishermen and Fishing*, depicting Molyvos, Lesvos, in 1961 and a series of photographs of the same settlement as it is today. We lead a discussion on the following: What do they observe? What has changed over time? Do they know that Lesvos is an island where refugees come and stay in closed structures? Students are asked to identify images from the internet about Molyvos and Lesvos today and about refugees, and discuss them.<sup>43</sup> They can also give titles to the photos of the 1960s and the photos of today.

<sup>43</sup> For example, we encourage students to look for the picture of the so-called “Lesvos grannies” taking care of a baby from Syria. (<https://www.ekathimerini.com/society/236675/lesvos-granny-a-symbol-of-solidarity-in-the-refugee-crisis-dies-at-age-90/>), or the image of the Lesvos fisherman who volunteered in the rescue operations of refugees. (<https://www.unhcr.org/gr/en/4584-volunteers-saved-lives-lesvos-nominated-nobel-peace-prize.html>). One of the grannies and the fisherman were nominated for the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize.

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## CINED.EU: DIGITAL PLATFORM DEDICATED TO EUROPEAN CINEMA EDUCATION

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- A collection of European films for ages 6 to 19
- Teaching materials to introduce and accompany the screenings: booklet on the film, pedagogical suggestions for the facilitator/teacher, worksheet for a young audience, educational videos for comparative analysis of film excerpts

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