

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

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MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE PRESENTS FIRST U.S. RETROSPECTIVE OF NORWEGIAN DIRECTOR ANJA BREIEN

Breien to appear in person at all screenings on opening weekend; Richard Peña and Jane Gaines to introduce screenings

November 1–9, 2013

Astoria, New York, October 28, 2013—Celebrated in her home country and throughout Europe, but little-known in America, the Norwegian filmmaker Anja Breien makes feminist, politically aware fiction and documentary films. From November 1 through 9, 2013, Museum of the Moving Image will present ***Anja Breien: Games of Love and Loneliness***, the first U.S. retrospective of Breien's work, featuring six features and a program of shorts, with the director in person for select screenings and for an opening reception.

"This retrospective, the first one of Breien's work in the United States, is a rare opportunity to see her work theatrically, with the filmmaker in person and with introductions by renowned scholars Jane Gaines and Richard Peña," said Chief Curator David Schwartz.

Because of their formal fluidity, exploration of women's issues, and controlled directorial style, Breien's films have often been compared to those of Chantal Akerman. Her first feature film, *Rape* (1971), a critique of the Norwegian judicial system, is not told chronologically, but starts simultaneously at the beginning and the end, working its way into the middle; it was recently compared to Asghar Farhadi's *A Separation* (2011). Inspired by John Cassavetes's *Husbands* (1970), Breien made *Wives* (1975) as a riposte. A major commercial and critical hit throughout Scandinavia, it follows the exploits of three housewives who decide to relinquish familial responsibilities and spend a day exploring their freedom. For this film, and its sequel, featuring the same characters played by the same actors, ten years later, critic Peter Cowie described Breien as a Dogme director 20 years before Dogme arrived. *Next of Kin* (1979), a satirical look at family members vying over an inheritance, was selected for the main competition in Cannes in 1979; Ingmar Bergman, a fan of the film, told Breien that it should have won an award.

Anja Breien: Games of Love and Loneliness was organized by guest curator Maria

Fosheim Lund, and presented with the cooperation of the Norwegian Film Institute, and with support from the Royal Norwegian Consulate General.

Tickets for screenings are included with Museum admission (\$12 adults / \$9 senior citizens and students) / \$6 children) and free for Museum members. To find out about membership and to join, visit <http://movingimage.us/support/membership> or call 718 777 6877.

Press Contact: Tomoko Kawamoto / tkawamoto@movingimage.us / 718 777 6830
DVD screeners are available for most films. Anja Breien is available for interviews.

**SCHEDULE FOR 'ANJA BREIEN: GAMES OF LOVE AND LONELINESS,'
NOVEMBER 1–9, 2013**

All screenings take place in the Sumner M. Redstone Theater or the Bartos Screening Room at Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35 Avenue in Astoria. Screenings are included with Museum admission and free for Museum members unless otherwise noted. Tickets for Friday evening screenings are \$12 adults / \$9 students and senior citizens.

All films directed by Anja Breien, unless noted.

Games of Love and Loneliness (Den allvarsamma leken)

Anja Breien will appear for discussion following the screening. Followed by opening night reception.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 7:00 P.M.

Sweden/Norway. Dir. Anja Breien. 1977, 99 mins. DCP. With Stefan Ekman, Lil Terselius, Katarina Gustafsson, Palle Granditsky. In the Victorian-era, aspiring newspaperman Arvid Stjärnblom falls in love with the beautiful Lydia Stille. Taught to behave with restraint, the young man puts love on hold, while pursuing both his career and material wealth. Lydia is willing to wait, but finds herself in difficult economic circumstances when her father dies, making this is a story of missed chances and unfulfilled love. *Games of Love and Loneliness* is adapted from the novel by Hjalmar Söderberg, who also wrote *Gertrud*, the source for Carl Dreyer's last film. The reception is presented with support from the Royal Norwegian Consulate General.

Wives (Hustruer)

Introduced by Jane Gaines, Columbia University. Followed by discussion with Anja Breien

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 3:00 P.M.

Norway. Dir. Anja Breien. 1975, 83 mins. 35mm. With Anne Marie Ottersen, Katja Medbøe, Frøydis Armand. Having seen John Cassavetes's *Husbands*, *Anja Breien felt prompted to make a humorous riposte*; a chronicle of female exploits. Three former classmates, Mie, Kaja, and Heidrun, now in their 30s, meet at a school reunion. Together, they represent the new post-war generation of middle-class Norwegian

women. Following a drunken evening, they make a sudden decision to flee their families and responsibilities; roaming about Oslo, they discuss sex, womanhood, and family responsibilities. Relying heavily on improvisation, the actresses (and co-authors) keep the story flowing within a tight structure that gradually reveals the characters' inner selves. *Wives* was an international success, gaining wide recognition for Breien. Columbia University professor Jane Gaines, director of the Women Film Pioneers Project, will introduce the screening, and there will be a discussion with Anja Breien following the screening.

Wives 10 Years After (Hustruer—10 år etter)

Followed by discussion with Anja Breien

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 5:30 P.M.

Norway. Dir. Anja Breien. 1985, 88 mins. 35mm. With: Frøydis Armand, Katja Medbøe, Anne Marie Ottersen. The second installment of Anja Breien's *Wives* trilogy reunites the three protagonists. The women, now in their 40s—in their prime, as Kaja insists—are still uncertain of their life choices, and all yearn to some degree of self-realization. Mie, now a divorcee, finds herself falling in love with two men and unable to choose. Kaja is more independent from her husband, running her own boutique, while Heidrun has unhappily fallen in love with a married man. The *Wives* trilogy prompted Peter Cowie to describe Breien as a Dogme director 20 years before Dogme arrived.

Witch Hunt (Forfølgelsen)

Introduced by Richard Peña, Columbia University. Followed by discussion with Anja Breien

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 3:00 P.M.

Sweden/Norway. Dir. Anja Breien. 1981, 93 mins. DCP. With Lil Terselius, Bjørn Skagestad, Anita Bjørk, Erik Mørk. In one isolated village, the Black Death—the bucolic plague that killed nearly half of Norway's population in 1349—spared only one; the little girl Eli Laupstad. Returning to her family's homestead after years away, Eli's independence and determination soon draws negative attention in a society fixated on exposing strong women as witches. When her lover Aslak suffers epileptic-like seizures, the village council is convinced a spell has been cast over him.

Next of Kin (Arven)

Followed by discussion with Anja Breien

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 5:30 P.M.

Norway. Dir. Anja Breien. 1979, 95 mins. 35 mm. With: Espen Skjønberg, Anita Bjørk, Hæge Juve, Jan Hårstad. Following the premature death of the childless and wealthy ship-owner Kai Skaug, his extended family is thrown into turmoil. The apparently benevolent will states that his tremendous wealth will go to charity, unless the family jointly manages to run his company. The will also names the deceased's brother, a research librarian, the successor of his seat. A polite family meeting at the deceased's estate disintegrates into chaos, as hidden conflicts come to the surface. The satirical

film questions whether modern individuals still need family relationships. *Next of Kin* was selected for the main competition in Cannes; Ingmar Bergman, a fan of the film, told Breien that it should have won an award.

Growing Up and Other Short Films

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2:00 P.M.

Growing Up—The Legend of the Justedalen Grouse (Vokse opp - Sagnet om rypa i Justedalen). 1967, 30 mins. 35mm. *Growing Up*, Breien's debut, is based on a medieval legend about a little girl who is the sole survivor of the bucolic plague. The film is set in a secluded mountain landscape through which the lonely child helplessly wanders. A group of men from a neighboring village set out to help her.

Faces (Ansikter). 1971, 7 mins. 35mm. Inspired by a poem written by the Danish poet Poul Borum after his first visit to the Munch Museum in Oslo, this short film is a poetic meditation on the expressive paintings by Edvard Munch (1863–1944). Claes Gill reads the poem to a composition by acclaimed Norwegian jazz musician Jan Garbarek.

The Walls Around the Prison (Murer rundt fengselet). 1972, 12 mins. 35mm. In this critique of the Norwegian penal system, Breien continues a plot begun in her first feature, *Rape* (1971). Interviews with anonymous individuals accompany images of the cold prison architecture, and reveal insights into the living conditions of the inmates.

Brothers and Sisters, Hello (Mine søsken, goddag). 1974, 11 mins. 35mm. In this unconventional presentation of works by the Norwegian graphic artist Arne Bendik Sjur, Breien visits his workshop and follows the artist into his pictorial world.

Solvorn. 1998, 9 mins. 35mm. Breien takes us back to the past through a remarkable series of photographs taken by her grandmother between 1908 and 1913 at Solvorn in Western Norway.

To See a Boat in Sail (Å se en båt med seil). 2001, 11 mins. 35mm. The summer of youth is contrasted with the winter of old age in this short film, where an elderly man lives in the picturesque surroundings of a lake near Rondane, and mysteriously recalls his past with a Neapolitan song.

Rape (Voldtekt)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 4:30 P.M.

Norway. Dir. Anja Breien. 1971, 96 mins. 35mm. With Svein Sturla Hungnes, Anne Marie Ottersen, Liv Thorsen, Per Carlson. The young road worker Anders is accused of rape based on circumstantial evidence. Breien, a feminist filmmaker, surprisingly assumes his point of view, circumventing the story of the rape victim. Anders is neither articulate nor familiar with appropriate codes of conduct in court. During the process against him, Anders's inarticulateness and general awkwardness makes him a victim of character murder and scapegoating. Breien's first feature film was aimed straight at the injustice in the Norwegian criminal justice system at the time, which recently led a Norwegian film critic to compare *Rape* to Asghar Farhadi's *A Separation* (2011). *Rape* premiered at Directors Fortnight in Cannes.

MUSEUM INFORMATION

Museum of the Moving Image (movingimage.us) advances the understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. In its expanded and renovated facilities—acclaimed for both its accessibility and bold design—the Museum presents exhibitions; screenings of significant works; discussion programs featuring actors, directors, craftspeople, and business leaders; and education programs which serve more than 50,000 students each year. The Museum also houses a significant collection of moving-image artifacts.

Hours: Wednesday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled. Tickets for regular film screenings are included with paid Museum admission and free for members.

Museum Admission: \$12.00 for adults; \$9.00 for persons over 65 and for students with ID; \$6.00 for children ages 3-12. Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tickets for special screenings and events may be purchased in advance by phone at 718 777 6800 or online.

Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R to Steinway Street. Q (weekdays only) or N to 36 Avenue.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: movingimage.us

Membership: <http://movingimage.us/support/membership> or 718 777 6877

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and located on the campus of Kaufman Astoria Studios. Its operations are made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation). The Museum also receives generous support from numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals. For more information, please visit movingimage.us.

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