

## 29<sup>th</sup> International Bremen Film Conference, 7 to 10 May 2025

University of Bremen (IKFK/ZeMKI)  
CITY 46 / Kommunalkino Bremen  
Arsenal Berlin – Institute for Film and Video Art

[Invitation // Call for Papers:](#)

### **Network Agnès Varda: Essayisms, Feminisms, Modernisms**

Introduction:

Agnès Varda (1928–2019) was not only highly creative but also very productive: her extensive oeuvre comprises film, photography and installation art, spanning more than six decades during which she continued to reinvent herself. During her career, she acted as a trailblazer of modern film by adding her own experimental twist to the creative vocabulary of the language of cinema, situating her work somewhere between the realism of documentaries and the fictionality of film poems. From about 2000, she discovered her passion for small digital cameras and – already in her 70s – embarked on a third career as an installation artist.

If you would like to give a paper at the 29<sup>th</sup> International Bremen Film Conference, please send us your abstract (2,000 characters) and a short biography, both in either German or English, by 12 October 2024. The conference will feature lectures, discussions, film screenings and roundtables. It will take place from 7 to 10 May 2025 at CITY 46 / Kommunalkino Bremen, organized by CITY 46 in collaboration with the University of Bremen and Arsenal Berlin – Institute for Film and Video Art.

Network:

The notion of the network arises somewhat organically from Varda's oeuvre, which is characterized by cooperation and relationality with others. "Network Agnès Varda" aims to look beyond the author and her work, to instead focus on the social fabric surrounding Varda, and the (historical) discourses and practices in which she was embedded. "Network Agnès Varda" thus specifically interrogates the correlations between her oeuvre and the work of others. The conference, as well as the accompanying publication in the series *Film-Konzepte* (Film Concepts), aim to bring together various interpretations of Agnès Varda that highlight the multiple facets of her films, her referencing of works and her influence on others. In this way, questions relating to the aesthetics of her films are to be supplemented by perspectives from other disciplines such as art, history, cultural studies, literature and musicology. We are particularly interested in the following thematic fields: essayisms, feminisms, and modernisms.

Essayisms:

Varda's unique approach – her cinécriture, or "cine-writing" – is concerned with collecting and reflecting themes, images and stories. Associations, coincidences and detours are therefore much more characteristic of her films than conclusive screenplays. Films such as *L'OPÉRA MOUFFE* (1958), *SALUT LES CUBAINS* (1963), *LES GLANEURS ET LA GLANEUSE* (2000), or *LES PLAGES D'AGNES* (2008) are open explorations and focused analyses in one that circumnavigate their subject matter and prefer raising rather than answering questions.

### Modernisms:

Varda was one of the first directors in Europe to translate modernist stylistic devices taken from art and literature onto the silver screen. One example is her debut film *LA POINTE COURTE* (1954): inspired by William Faulkner's novel *WILD PALMS*, it intertwines two distinct strands of the plot, thus blurring the lines between fiction and documentary (Kelly Conway). The film's score also showcases modernist composers. The aim of her films is not identification; instead, they maintain somewhat of a distance, shatter illusions, and offer a glimpse behind the scenes. Many draw attention to their own artificiality, emphasizing the "DIY nature of fiction" (Frieda Grafe).

### Feminisms:

Since her international breakthrough hit *CLÉO DE 5 À 7* (1961), in which the protagonist emancipates herself from being a passive object of the male gaze to becoming an actively observing flâneuse (Mouton, 2000), Varda has evidently combined her modernist affinities with a feminist perspective. With her fondness for modernism, she tells stories of female solidarity (*UNE CHANTE, L'AUTRE PAS*, 1963), and links these with activist discourses around bodily self-determination (*RÉPONSE DE FEMMES: NOTRE CORPS, NOTRE SEXE*, 1975) and reflections on gender performativity (*JANE B. PAR AGNES V.*).

The 29<sup>th</sup> International Bremen Film Conference is meant to be a forum that brings together different theoretical and methodological approaches to the Network surrounding Agnès Varda and invites an interdisciplinary exchange.

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