

Specters of: Part 1

Film screening at 98weeks in Beirut, curated by Beirut

Specters of: Part 1 is a two-day film screening that takes Cairo as its point of departure and arrival via *Beirut* and its founding with a first season focused on labor and its (cinematic) representation: a timely detour traversing the connections between land and territories, journeys and coincidences, affiliations and social sentiments, moments of resistance and modes of representation. The program is part of an ongoing film exchange between 98weeks in Beirut and *Beirut* in Cairo.

Straub & Huillet, *Trop Tot, Trop Tard* (1982) 100 min.

Shot in the summer of 1980, this film from longtime directorial partners Straub and Huillet investigates the changing relationship between people, the land, and society in France and Egypt. The formal and structural basis for the film consists of two texts: a letter sent by Friedrich Engels to his disciple Karl Kautsky, and Egyptian intellectual Mahmoud Hussein's *{-Class Struggles in Egypt}*. At the center of each text is a discussion of the people's relationship to the land. What Straub and Huillet have done is to film the specific places mentioned in each text -- for the Engels section we see shots of Mottreff, Lyons, and Harville; for the Hussein section we see the area around Neguib; and these shots are synced with a voice-over reading of the texts. What emerges is a document that functions as a history of Marxist thought, a landscape film, and as commentary on current French and Egyptian society. –A review summary borrowed from Brian Whitener, Rovi

Johan van der Keuken, *Vers Le Sud* (1980-81) 160 min.

'The Way South' is the account of a journey, a travelogue. The filmmaker leaves from Amsterdam and, two hours and 20 minutes later, loses himself completely in the Cairo crowd. He passes by Paris, the Drôme, Rome, Calabria. Those who he crosses paths with and respond to his questions have nothing in common except for this: they have accepted their environment, they don't want anything else, they want to stay where they are. Thus in Egypt, nothing much comes out of the interviews. One lies easily to the man with the camera. Aggrieved, he heads off to the road and starts filming the circulation. A packed train, a crowd in pyjamas, carts out of a sword-and-sandal film, cars threading slowly, astonished children, deranged animals, fine dust and, in between, faster than them, the eye of the filmmaker. Images without a stake, bath of images, images that have – finally – lost the North. –Compiled from a text by Serge Daney, originally published as 'Vers le sud. Johan Van der Keuken', *Libération* (2 March 1982)

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