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The Telegraph

Artists and dealers to stage a free festival of video art online - including works that usually cost up to £100,000 to own

In lockdown we are being treated to a jamboree of free film art. Our expert explains how to make the most of it



Still from Daniel Steegman-Magrane's *Fog Dog*; film is set in the Institute of Fine Arts in Dhaka, and features wild dogs. It is priced €25,000 to €50,000 CREDIT: Esther Schipper gallery

If you're up for a challenge during these difficult months, contemporary art dealers are coming together independently in a spontaneous moment of synchronicity to present what effectively amounts to a mini international festival of film and video by artists. The works range from early-Seventies experimental videos made on hand-held camcorders to the latest, more sophisticated productions.

Prices range from between £2,000 and £100,000 but can be enjoyed free on your phone or computer over a limited time frame. Due to the need to protect the works' value, they are not otherwise accessible on the web; strict copyright laws apply. However, because of the lockdown, artists are giving dealers permission to broadcast their work on the dealers' websites beyond the normal exhibition conditions.

Some viewers might be tempted to illegally download a copy, but Amanda Wilkinson, who has a gallery in London's Soho, says: "We just trust people not to abuse this." Wilkinson's choice reflects the conceptual nature of many of the first video artists who emerged in the late Sixties and early Seventies, such as Joan Jonas, who used her Portapak to record performances.

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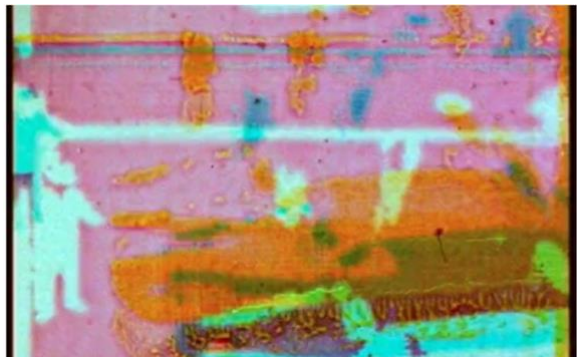
Jonas is now 83 and revered enough to have been selected to represent the US in the 2015 Venice Biennale. Her *Mirror Improvisation* (2005), being shown by Wilkinson today, is a witty recording of the artist with a friend and her dog romping in a playground, reflected in a convex mirror. Its price – a revelation, as videos by the artist never appear at auction – is \$45,000 plus VAT.



A still from Derek Jarman's *Electric Fairy*, 1971 CREDIT: James Mackay

Next up at Wilkinson is the late Derek Jarman. She decided to resurrect his first film, *Electric Fairy* (1971), which was discovered after he died and had to be restored. This rare survivor, with a Grayson Perry lookalike in the lead role as a cross-gender stripper flirting with the camera like a glittering fairy under an electric light, is priced at \$30,000 plus VAT. Some of the work in Wilkinson's programme is hilariously dotty.

Swingeing London (1974) was made by Steve Farrer, a member of the experimental London Film-makers' Co-operative. The soundtrack recounts in the clipped tones of an old-fashioned newsreader the colour of every article of clothing worn by Keith Richards and Mick Jagger on the day of their court appearance on drugs charges in Chichester in 1967. The screen bears only traces of the actual events, submerged in an avalanche of blurry colour.



A still from Steve Farrer's *Swingeing London*, 1974 CREDIT: The Artist

Meanwhile, Berlin's Esther Schipper gallery is breaking its rule not to put a new artist's video online if it's for sale. They are making an exception in the case of Daniel Steegman Magrané, whose new 47-minute video, *Fog Dog*, is the artist's first venture into cinematic storytelling.

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The film is set in the Institute of Fine Arts in Dhaka, where the daily business is shared somewhat incongruously by a group of wild dogs who inhabit the building and is priced €25,000 to €50,000. As with all editioned work, the price goes up the more editions are sold and less become available.

Back in London, Timothy Taylor's exhibition for American artist Josephine Meckseper had to be cut short, so he is making her film, *Pellea(s)*, available to the public. It's a 42-minute broken narrative of a love triangle, set during the inauguration parade for Donald Trump in Washington and the Women's March that followed.

Named after Maeterlinck's symbolist play about doomed love, *Pelleas and Melisande*, the film was premiered at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2018 on a 20 x 50ft screen, so won't look quite the same on your laptop. But use your imagination, enjoy the music by Arnold Schoenberg and indulge in the references to Godard and Hitchcock. It will cost you \$60,000 to \$90,000.



Film still from Josephine Meckseper's work *Pellea(s)*, 2017 CREDIT: © Josephine Meckseper. /Courtesy of the artist and Timothy Taylor, London/New York.

Although details are not yet available, the London, Johannesburg and Cape Town Goodman Gallery is planning what promises to be a mouth-watering season of dramatic films by the US-based Iranian artist Shirin Neshat. Neshat is a prominent artistic campaigner for the rights of women and of exiled minorities everywhere. DVDs of her work have sold for over \$250,000 at auction.

Ecological campaigners have our ears and eyes at the moment. One is Swiss filmmaker Julian Charrière, whose new film *Towards No Earthly Pole* was posted online by New York's Sean Kelly Gallery last week, receiving over 2,000 viewers from the US, Europe and Asia in 24 hours. The 104-minute film was shot at night on board a Russian research ship during the Antarctic Biennale, and the results are eerily hypnotic.

Its reception encouraged Kelly to also present *Travel* – a 15-minute journey through a virtual jungle landscape by Belgian superstar David Claerbout – on Friday. Next week, he moves on to the incomparable Marina Abramovic.

No artists' film festival would be complete without London's Lisson gallery. This week, it launches a six-week programme that kicks off on a strong moralistic note with a dreamlike, animated parable by Berlin-based duo, Djurberg & Berg, about the drawbacks of wealth; an exploration into the disappearance of language by Susan Hiller; an algorithmic artwork that explores hyperconnectivity and digital overload by Irish artist Gerard Byrne; and a meditation on our ill treatment of the environment by American Hugh Hayden. This all makes for very pertinent, challenging and entertaining viewing just when we need it.

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Galleries showing films

[Amanda Wilkinson Gallery](#)

[Esther Schipper](#)

[Timothy Taylor Gallery](#)

[Sean Kelly Gallery](#)

[Lisson Gallery](#)

Other useful information on film art

[UbuWeb](#)

[Tate film](#)

[Kramlich Collection](#)

[The Whitechapel Gallery](#)