

The Art of Time Project's

Recommended Watching List

Welcome to The Art of Project's recommended watching list. While writing the recommended reading list I realised there were wonderful films that I wanted to include. That, combined with the fact that people learn in different ways, led me to create this additional resource. I will be adding new films to this regularly, so please do check back.

Unlike the recommended reading list, this list focuses less on educational content, and more on imaginative portrayals and treatments of time and temporality. It is intended to provide inspiration and provocation for thinking creatively about time. While there are many films which deal with time, I focus here on those which may be less well-known and those which I find particularly provocative for creative thought.

I have personally written a summary of each film, explaining the content, why I have recommended it, and any benefits or drawbacks. I have also included details such as the year the film was made, the filmmaker/director, the primary language, the genre (if applicable), the age rating*, and where you can find these films.

If there are any films or videos you would like to recommend, please message me via the contact page on the website and I will make every effort to watch it. If you have any questions about any of the films listed here, again, please feel free to contact me.

Enjoy your watching!

Kerry Langsdale

*I have not included content warnings because I do not believe I can adequately provide a complete list. Some of these films do include content which may be difficult or disturbing. Please check the content of each film before watching if this is a concern.

Time in Film

La Jetée

Directed by Chris Marker

Year: 1962

Genre: Not easily classified but has been dubbed 'radical science fiction' and has a post-apocalyptic setting.

Language: French (English subtitles are available).

Age Certification: 15

Summary

A stunning and mesmerising film. This short, black-and-white French film is constructed almost entirely from still photographs over which the story is narrated. Set in post-apocalyptic Paris, in the aftermath of World War 3, our protagonist narrates his experiences as a test subject for scientists researching time travel. Though many test subjects are rejected due to being unable to cope with the shock of the experiments, our protagonist turns out to be the ideal subject due to his obsession over a pre-war experience from his childhood; an experience of a beautiful woman, and a shocking incident on a jetty.

Aside from being, in my opinion, one of the best films ever made, I recommend this film because of its portrayal of time travel. The narrative leads us to a wonderful realisation, upon which there is much to ponder concerning the nature of time travel. The use of narration over still images allows the audience space to absorb and think through the content. Not only this, but the use of still images to portray the movement of time provokes questions about the very fabric, and nature, of time itself.

Availability:

You can watch the trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WstrUci5Fbg>.

This film is available on DVD, and you expect to pay £6-£10 for a copy. If you can get a copy, I would recommend making this film a part of your collection.

The Endless

By Justin Benson and Aaron Moorhead.

Year: 2017.

Genre: Science fiction horror.

Language: English.

Age Certification: 15

Summary

This independent film written, created and performed by Benson and Moorhead is an intriguing yet slightly disturbing experience. Though perhaps not the best film on this list in terms of entertainment, I recommend watching this film for its portrayal of the manipulation of time, and cyclic time.

The Endless follows two brothers, Justin and Aaron, who were raised in an unusual commune in a secluded area outside San Diego. They left the commune, known as Camp Arcadia, many years previously to try to live 'normal' lives. One day they unexpectedly receive a videotape from Camp Arcadia, and, dissatisfied with their struggles to live a 'normal' life, they discuss a visit to the camp. Justin, who believed the commune to be a UFO death cult, is hesitant to return. Aaron, who viewed the commune as an unorthodox, but largely harmless group, wants to go back. Aaron wins out, convincing Justin to return for a night.

Once they arrive, things steadily get weirder, especially for Justin. No one seems to have aged much in the years since they left, Justin feels followed by something unknown, two moons rise in the sky, and on the outskirts of the camp, several people are stuck in torturous temporal situations. I remain haunted by the man in the tent...

Availability:

You can watch the trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reMwL8uYXps>

You can purchase this film on DVD new from most media stores, or it is usually available used for £3 - £5.

I'm Thinking of Ending Things

By Charlie Kaufman

Year: 2020

Genre: Psychological thriller

Language: English.

Age Certification: 15

Summary

Ok, this is a strange one. Strange, both in its content, and that I chose to suggest it here. This film doesn't, strictly speaking, deal with time in theme or narrative. It is simply a character study of an ageing janitor who laments that he has not achieved his academic, or principally, romantic goals. The telling is far from simple, however, as this man's psyche is revealed to us through odd exchanges, disquieting occurrences, and subtle, obscure references.

Setting this aside, if you watch this film in mind of investigating temporal experience, there is much to reflect on. (Yes, I know, I'm always steering the conversation away from temporal experience and towards the metaphysical but stick with me on this one!). As the film reveals itself as the cognitive content of our protagonist reflecting on his life, temporal linearity dissolves, descending into sporadic moments of non-consecutive time mingling together. In and amongst this, we see moments that our protagonist didn't really live, at least, not in this world; he imagines moments from a possible alternative life, an alternative timeline, which he could have experienced had things gone differently for him.

I will warn you, this film is rather bleak. However, it is no less beautiful for all of its uneasiness and despair. Importantly, it should set your cogs to turning!

Availability: This is a Netflix exclusive and so is currently only available to watch on Netflix. You can watch the trailer here: <https://youtu.be/cDTg62vsV4U?feature=shared>

Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy Working with Time

By Thomas Riedelsheimer

Year: 2001

Genre: Documentary

Language: English.

Age Certification: U

Summary

'Rivers and Tides' provides insight into both the art and the artist as Riedelsheimer follows Goldsworthy around, documenting his process. Goldsworthy discusses a variety of works, some fragile and delicate, made of fallen leaves and precariously balanced branches, and some ostensibly sturdy and stable, made of rock and trees. Built into each work, regardless of how immutable it may seem, is Goldsworthy's acknowledgement and apparent fascination with the ephemeral nature of time.

I want to make particular note of the special features on the DVD, which are fantastic and not to be missed. There are several short films of different Goldsworthy works, some of which feature the artist himself discussing the creation. Each of these short films gives us the opportunity to sit with several of Goldsworthy's works. The leisurely pace grants us time to reflect upon the process and the finished pieces.

Availability: You can purchase this film on DVD new from most media stores, or it is usually available used for approx. £ 5. The one downside of the Artificial Eye DVD release is that there are no subtitles.

You can watch the trailer here: <https://youtu.be/AT3lveJmjY8?feature=shared>

Punctum Temporis

By Michael C Coldwell

Year: 2014

Genre: Art/Documentary

Language: English.

Age Certification: NA.

Summary

Considering the nature of The Art of Time Project it is likely unsurprising that I am particularly enamoured with work which blends art and philosophy in (near enough) equal measures. This stunning film by Coldwell does just that. As well as featuring striking black

and white footage, this film is also narrated by philosopher Robin Le Poidevin, (who will be familiar to anyone who has browsed my recommended reading list as the author of 'Travels in Four Dimensions').

Those who watched *La Jetée* (above) will likely note its influence on *Punctum Temporis*, and I would not be the first to compare Coldwell's work with Marker's. Unlike *La Jetée*, though, which is largely still image and sets a steady pace, the pacing of the footage in *Punctum Temporis* changes regularly. The confidently slow and measured pace of *La Jetée* draws the focus of its audience to very particular aspects of time. Conversely, the carefully curated variation of pace within *Punctum Temporis* provokes its audience to ask a multitude of different questions about the nature of time.

One of the many mysteries of time that *Punctum Temporis* asks us to consider is the nature of moments in time, and the passing and changing of which moment is present; topics which I explore heavily in my own academic research. Is time composed of individual moments, or individual static slices of time? Is the passage of time of time nothing more than a succession of static moments, like scanning through a flip book, or watching a zoetrope? Do moments exist, or is a 'moment in time' merely a useful myth to help us talk about time?

Availability: This film is available to watch on Micheal Coldwell's website:

<https://www.michaelcoldwell.co.uk/archived/punctum-temporis>