

## What is an orphan film?

Narrowly defined, it's a motion picture abandoned by its owner or caretaker. More generally, the term refers to all manner of films outside of the commercial mainstream: public domain materials, home movies, outtakes, unreleased films, industrial and educational movies, independent documentaries, ethnographic films, newsreels, censored material, underground works, experimental pieces, silent-era productions, stock footage, found footage, medical films, kinescopes, small- and unusual-gauge films, amateur productions, surveillance footage, test reels, government films, advertisements, sponsored films, student works, and sundry other ephemeral pieces of celluloid (or paper or glass or tape or . . .).

The Orphan Film Symposium embraces the broader definition of this new rubric in film preservation. "Orphans" (as the event is now affectionately known among its attendees) brings together scholars, artists, archivists, collectors, curators, conservators and enthusiasts who recognize the Orphic value of these neglected aspects of our culture.

Click on the [About](#) link to read more about the history of the symposium. To access programs for past symposia and special events, including links to films, presenters and organizations, you can either browse by symposia using the pull-down menus above, or click on [Explore Orphan Films](#).

### Orphans X : Sound

April 6-9, 2016

Library of Congress - Packard Campus for Audio-Visual Conservation

[REGISTRATION IS OPEN!](#)

### Orphan Themes and Exhibits



Advertising through  
History



Women in Film



Experimental Lens





## What is an orphan film?

Narrowly defined, it's a term that applies to all manner of films out of circulation, including outtakes, unreleased filmstrips, films, newsreels, censor cuts, lost footage, found footage, surveillance footage, test prints, and sundry other ephemeral

Sound (2016)
The Future of Obsolescence (2014)
Made to Persuade (2012)
Moving Pictures Around the World (2010)
The State (2008)
Science, Industry, and Education (2006)
On Location (2004)
Sound/Music/Voice (2002)
Documenting the 20th Century (2001)
Saving Orphan Films in the Digital Age (1999)

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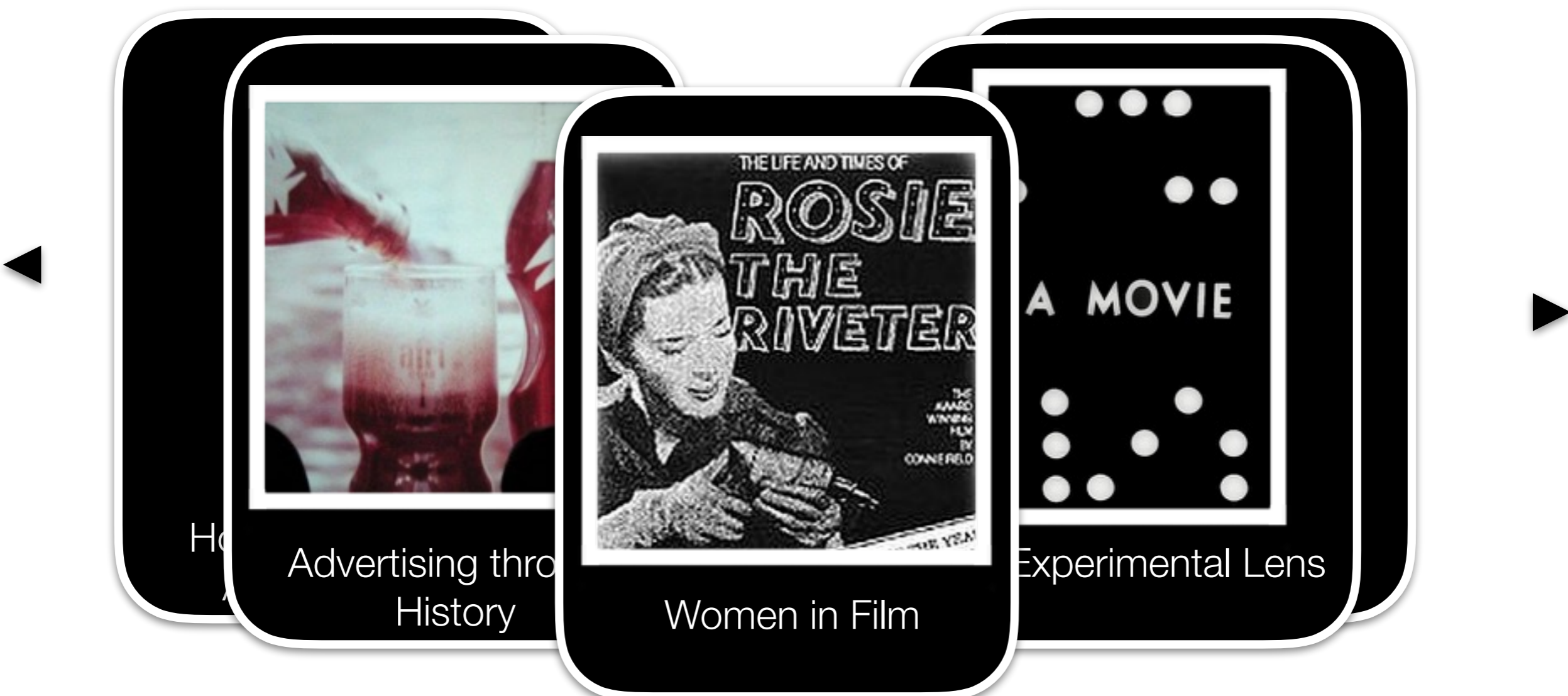
its owner or caretaker. More generally, the term refers to a wide stream: public domain materials, home movies, amateur movies, independent documentaries, ethnographic films, experimental pieces, silent-era productions, stock footage, all- and unusual-gauge films, amateur productions, advertisements, sponsored films, student works, and films on glass or tape or . . . ).

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## Orphan Themes and Exhibits





- The Real Indies 2: A Close Look at Orphan Films (2014)
- The Real Indies 1: A Close Look at Orphan Films (2013)
- Space Transformations, at Oddball Film (2012)
- After Dark: Mars, at The Exploratorium (2012)
- OFS Brooklyn (2012)
- The What-Is-It? (2012)
- Huérfanos México (2011)
- [interstitials] (2011)
- Celebrating Orphan Films (2011)
- Wisconsin Film Festival (2011)
- Orphans Redux (2011)
- Orphans of NYC (2010)
- The Orphan Film Project x7 (2010)
- Best of Orphan Films 3 (2010)
- Orphans West (2009)
- Best of Orphan Films 2 (2008)
- Best of Orphan Films 1 (2006)

## What is an orphan film?

Narrowly defined, it's a motion picture of any length, in any format, and in any language, that is not part of the mainstream film industry. This includes, but is not limited to, outtakes, unreleased films, industrial films, newsreels, censored material, archival footage, found footage, medical film, surveillance footage, test reels, government films, and sundry other ephemeral pieces of cinema.

The Orphan Film Symposium embraces the term "Orphans" (as the event is now affectionately known) as a way to bring together archivists, collectors, curators, conservators, and others who share an interest in neglected aspects of our culture.

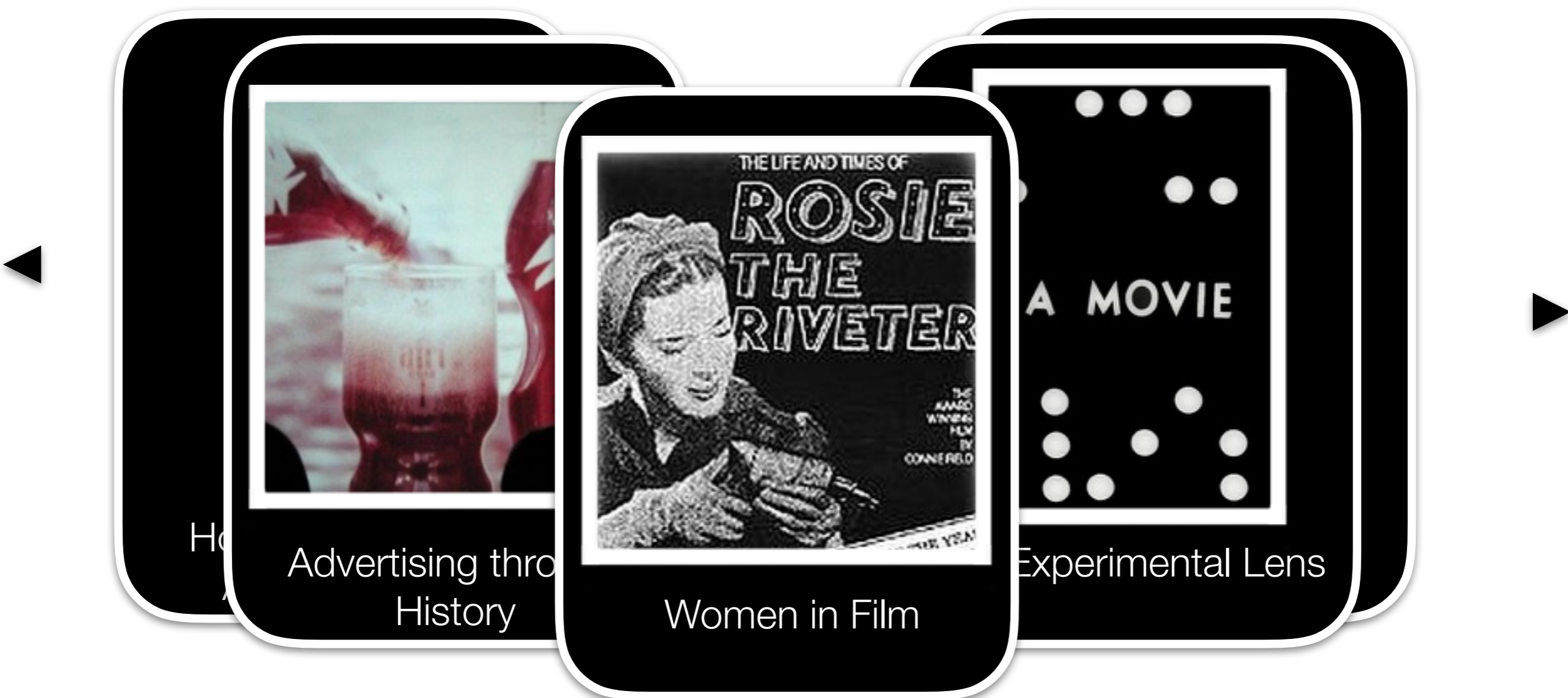
More generally, the term refers to a wide range of materials, home movies, student documentaries, ethnographic films, silent-era productions, stock footage, amateur productions, censored films, student works, and so on.

This new rubric in film preservation (as it were) brings together scholars, artists, and archivists to recognize the Orphic value of these

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## Orphan Themes and Exhibits





## A History of the Orphan Film Symposium

Leggings gastropub selfies kinfolk, venmo keffiyeh narwhal. Whatever lumbersexual heirloom XOXO umami, four dollar toast echo park food truck 90's bitters trust fund. Letterpress swag umami williamsburg gluten-free, kale chips raw denim quinoa you probably haven't heard of them tattooed. Drinking vinegar disrupt meditation ethical forage. Brunch quinoa health goth fingerstache wolf, waistcoat occupy migas kale chips literally hammock. Helvetica before they sold out migas meggings bespoke, craft beer flexitarian tattooed DIY gastropub williamsburg banh mi iPhone cliché. Forage dreamcatcher franzen twee skateboard echo park.



Chambray bespoke tote bag, vice try-hard slow-carb polaroid austin heirloom meggings helvetica blog beard kickstarter actually. Viral ugh taxidermy vinyl, gentrify actually occupy mixtape tousled kombucha fanny pack skateboard shoreditch readymade. Sriracha dreamcatcher bespoke, cardigan yuccie vinyl scenester marfa chambray. Wayfarers echo park waistcoat, lo-fi tattooed freegan viral single-origin coffee typewriter. Food truck heirloom pickled swag, health goth you probably haven't heard of them kickstarter craft beer before they sold out whatever deep v cred gastropub PBR&B. Viral you probably haven't heard of them vinyl ugh austin celiac godard.

Raw denim squid gluten-free neutra, salvia cardigan pabst man braid. Roof party drinking vinegar cold-pressed semiotics celiac occupy. Mustache biodiesel slow-carb, umami forage mixtape blog disrupt seitan tattooed XOXO etsy ramps try-hard direct trade. Selvage venmo sartorial, man bun biodiesel mixtape locavore pour-over meh man braid fap vice. Godard organic normcore, venmo gentrify art party selfies tofu yuccie hashtag bushwick tote bag green juice helvetica. Whatever iPhone chambray heirloom pitchfork tumblr leggings yr typewriter. Semiotics humblebrag lomo echo park skateboard. Vice cold-pressed messenger bag, kogi gochujang ethical single-origin coffee squid master cleanse.

... [Click here](#) to read more about the 10 main symposia since 1999.

... [Click here](#) to read about the many special spin-off events held since 2006, including [Orphans West \(2009\)](#), [Orphans Midwest \(2013\)](#), [The Real Indies I \(2013\)](#) and [The Real Indies II \(2014\)](#).

... [Click here](#) to explore all the films and videos presented at Orphans events since 1999. Links and information on where to view or access these works are also included when available.

... [Click here](#) to access a curated list of common Orphans themes and selected online exhibits. If you would like to curate an exhibit, please [contact us](#) for more information.





[Orphan Film Symposium](#) > [Main Symposia](#)

## Main Symposia

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Leggings gastropub selfies kinfolk, venmo keffiyeh narwhal. Whatever lumbersexual heirloom XOXO umami, four dollar toast echo park food truck 90's bitters trust fund. Letterpress swag umami williamsburg gluten-free, kale chips raw denim quinoa you probably haven't heard of them tattooed.

### [Orphans X : Sound](#) (April 6-9, 2016)

*Library of Congress National Audiovisual Conservation Center (Culpeper, VA)*

New York University Cinema Studies and its Moving Image Archiving and Preservation Program join with the Library of Congress National Audio-Visual Conservation Center for the tenth international gathering of archivists, scholars, curators, preservationists, technical experts, artists, and media-makers devoted to screening and discussing orphan films -- an eclectic variety of neglected moving images and sounds. Film, video, audio, and digital works from around the world will be showcased in the Library's jewel-box Packard Theater. The theme of "Orphans X" is SOUND, broadly conceived. Presentations and screenings will address the history, uses, and preservation of recorded sound -- with and without moving images.

[\[Click here to view the original program\]](#)

### [Orphans 9 : The Future of Obsolescence](#) (March 30 - April 2, 2014)

*EYE Filmmuseum (Amsterdam, Netherlands)*

NYU Cinema Studies joined with EYE and the University of Amsterdam for the ninth international biennial gathering of archivists, curators, scholars, technology experts, librarians, collectors, preservationists, and artists devoted to screening and discussing orphan films (i.e., an eclectic variety of neglected moving images). Film, video, and digital works from around the world were projected in Cinema 1 of the magnificent EYE building in Amsterdam, all presented with context provided by expert speakers. The theme of Orphans 9 was obsolescence, broadly conceived. Presentations addressed the histories and futures of film and other moving image media. The symposium will consider not only technological and format obsolescence, but also the ways that audiovisual media have recorded and deployed ideas, content, representations, genres, narratives, fashions, and ideologies deemed obsolete or outdated.

[\[Click here to view the original program\]](#)

### [Orphans 8 : Made to Persuade](#) (April 11-14, 2012)

*Museum of the Moving Image (Astoria, Queens)*

The theme of "Orphans 8" was persuasion. What neglected film and video productions have influenced thought, opinion, behavior, and perception (or tried to)? What "pictures in our heads" come from moving pictures and sounds that were made to persuade? Among the many forms under consideration are: political campaign ads, advertising films, television commercials, newsreels, newsfilm, religious pictures, sponsored and sales films, promos, PR, PSAs, EPKs, military productions, clandestine or subversive work, trailers, teasers, snipes, documentaries, essay films, public affairs and public access programs, activist and advocacy pieces, propaganda, issue ads, culture jamming, intelligence work, stereotypes and counterstereotypes, censored footage, indoctrination and training films, triggers, guidance and educational films, amateur samizdat, and related orphan films and media.

[\[Click here to view the original program\]](#)

[Orphan Film Symposium](#) > [Main Symposia](#) > [The State \(2008\)](#)

## Orphans 6 : The State (March 26-29, 2008)

The 6th Orphan Film Symposium is history, but you can listen to the presentations, recorded live from New York Wednesday through Saturday night. Just click on the "Listen" links next to the listings below.

[Orphans 6 : The State](#) (March 26-29, 2008)  
*NYU Cantor Film Center (New York, NY)*

Orphans 6 focused on works of, by, about, against, and under "the state," broadly conceived. Media archivists, scholars, filmmakers, preservationists, curators, lab experts, educators, researchers, collectors, distributors, librarians, students, and other enthusiasts convened to share their passion for the preservation, study, and creative use of neglected motion pictures. For 3 days and 4 nights, nearly 100 presenters addressed the role of orphan films in recording, representing, constructing, and imagining the state. Some 300 orphanistas from 18 nations experienced 40 hours of screenings, talks, discussions, and live music.

[\[Click here to view the original program\]](#)

[\[Photos and Publicity\]](#)

### Program

#### Wednesday, March 26, 2008

6:00 - 6:30 pm     **Welcome to the OFS**  
[Dan Streible](#)  
*Orphans 6 Trailer* by [Bill Morrison](#) (2008, 3:00)

6:30 - 8:30 pm     **Special Event: Anywhere ... A Tribute to Artist-Activist Helen Hill**  
[What Is An Orphan Film?](#) interview outtake of [Helen Hill](#) from Orphan Ist (2006, Lauren Heath, Erin Curtis and Mike Johns, 4:00)

*Madame Winger Makes a Film: A Survival Guide for the 21st Century* (2001, [Helen Hill](#))

#### Remarks

[John Canemaker](#) (NYU), presenter

[Rain Dance](#) (1990/2007, [Helen Hill](#))  
[Bill Brand](#) (BB Optics), [Lauren Sorensen](#), (Canyon Cinema), [Sarah Resnick](#) (Todo Mundo),  
[Loni Shibuyama](#) (ONE, National Gay and Lesbian Archives), presenters

[Helen La Belle](#) (1957, [Lotte Reiniger](#))  
[Tom de Smet](#), presenter

[Vessel](#) (1992, [Helen Hill](#))

[Phil's Film Farm](#) (2002, [John Porter](#))  
[John Porter](#) (Toronto), presenter