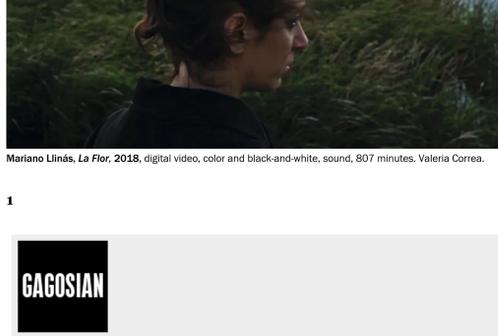


FILM

## MELISSA ANDERSON

By Melissa Anderson

Melissa Anderson is the film editor of 4Columns.Mariano Llinás, *La Flor*, 2018, digital video, color and black-and-white, sound, 807 minutes. Valeria Correa.

1

## GAGOSIAN

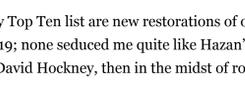
## LA FLOR (Mariano Llinás)

For nearly fourteen hours, this protean magnum opus, held together by an extraordinary quartet of actresses (Elisa Carricajo, Valeria Correa, Pilar Gamboa, and Laura Paredes), immerses us in the pleasures of densely detailed fiction.

Jack Hazan, *A Bigger Splash*, 1974, 35 mm transferred to 4K video, color, sound, 106 minutes.

2

## A BIGGER SPLASH (Jack Hazan)



Several titles on my Top Ten list are new restorations of older films I saw for the first time in 2019; none seduced me quite like Hazan's beautiful 1974 docufiction about David Hockney, then in the midst of romantic agony and creative fervor.

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ONE MORE FOR THE ROAD



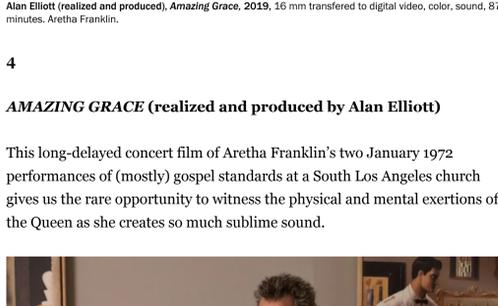
TROUBLE DUTCH

Mati Diop, *Atlantique* (Atlantics), 2019, HD video, color, sound, 105 minutes. Possessed woman (Fanton Yande Ndiaye).

3

## ATLANTICS (Mati Diop)

In her bold feature-length debut, a Senegal-set tale about the migrant crisis, Diop astutely remixes the ghost story, producing a nimble allegory in which the living are reanimated by the furious dead.

Alan Elliott (realized and produced), *Amazing Grace*, 2019, 16 mm transferred to digital video, color, sound, 87 minutes. Aretha Franklin.

4

## AMAZING GRACE (realized and produced by Alan Elliott)

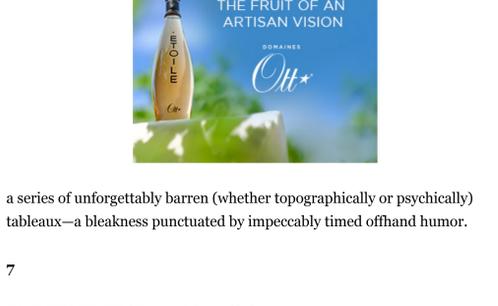
This long-delayed concert film of Aretha Franklin's two January 1972 performances of (mostly) gospel standards at a South Los Angeles church gives us the rare opportunity to witness the physical and mental exertions of the Queen as she creates so much sublime sound.

Pedro Almodóvar, *Pain and Glory*, 2019, 2K video, color, sound, 113 minutes. Salvador (Antonio Banderas). Production still. Photo: Manolo Pavón.

5

## PAIN AND GLORY (Pedro Almodóvar)

The most self-referential of Almodóvar's films stands as one of his best: a mournful, lusty quasi-autobiopic in which the writer-director shares authorship equally with Antonio Banderas, the actor who plays a version of him.

Nina Menkes, *Queen of Diamonds*, 1991, 35 mm transferred to 4K video, color, sound, 77 minutes. Firdaus (Tinka Menkes).

6

## QUEEN OF DIAMONDS (Nina Menkes)

Set in a desiccated Las Vegas, Menkes's entrancing 1991 film, recently restored, situates its anomic protagonist in

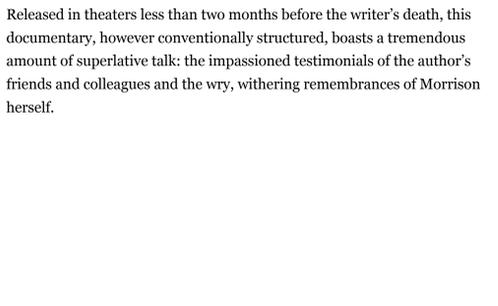


a series of unforgettably barren (whether topographically or psychically) tableaux—a bleakness punctuated by impeccably timed offhand humor.

7

## MARTIN EDEN (Pietro Marcello)

Marcello's robust, innovative adaptation of Jack London's 1906 *Kiinstlerroman* is the best page-to-screen transfer I've seen since Chantal Akerman took on Proust in *La Captive* (2000).

Arthur J. Bressan Jr., *Gay USA*, 1977, 16 mm and 35 mm transferred to 2K video, color, sound, 78 minutes.

8

## GAY USA (Arthur J. Bressan Jr.)

Shown once in a 2K restoration at New York's Quad Cinema in June, Bressan's effulgent chronicle—assembled from spirited interviews conducted in several US cities during the Pride parades of 1977—reflects utopian hopes not yet extinguished, a movement not yet grotesquely branded.

9

## TONI MORRISON: THE PIECES I AM (Timothy Greenfield-Sanders)

Released in theaters less than two months before the writer's death, this documentary, however conventionally structured, boasts a tremendous amount of superlative talk: the impassioned testimonies of the author's friends and colleagues and the wry, withering remembrances of Morrison herself.

Quentin Tarantino, *Once Upon a Time . . . in Hollywood*, 2019, 35 mm, color and black-and-white, sound, 161 minutes. Cliff Booth (Brad Pitt). Production still. Photo: Andrew Cooper.

10

## AD ASTRA (James Gray) and ONCE UPON A TIME . . . IN HOLLYWOOD (Quentin Tarantino)

The greatest asset in each of these far-from-perfect films is Brad Pitt, who plays a weepy astronaut in the former and an underemployed stuntman in the latter. Together, the two movies form a dynamite diptych, showcasing the only male A-lister over fifty whose magnetism continues to deepen.

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