



TREASURES FROM THE YALE FILM ARCHIVE

AN ONGOING SERIES OF CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY FILMS PRESENTED IN 35MM BY THE YALE FILM STUDY CENTER

SATURDAY
APRIL 15, 2017
7:00PM • WHITNEY
HUMANITIES CENTER

CANDY MOUNTAIN

CANDY MOUNTAIN has an impressive, and impressively eclectic, pedigree: directed by photographer and filmmaker Robert Frank, best known for his book *The Americans*, and Rudy Wurlitzer, the screenwriter behind the classic TWO-LANE BLACKTOP (1971), and featuring a host of musicians including Tom Waits, Leon Redbone, Dr. John, and Joe Strummer in small but glorious roles. A time capsule of a very particular 1980s, the film is every bit as wonderful, strange, and moving as this list of ingredients would suggest.

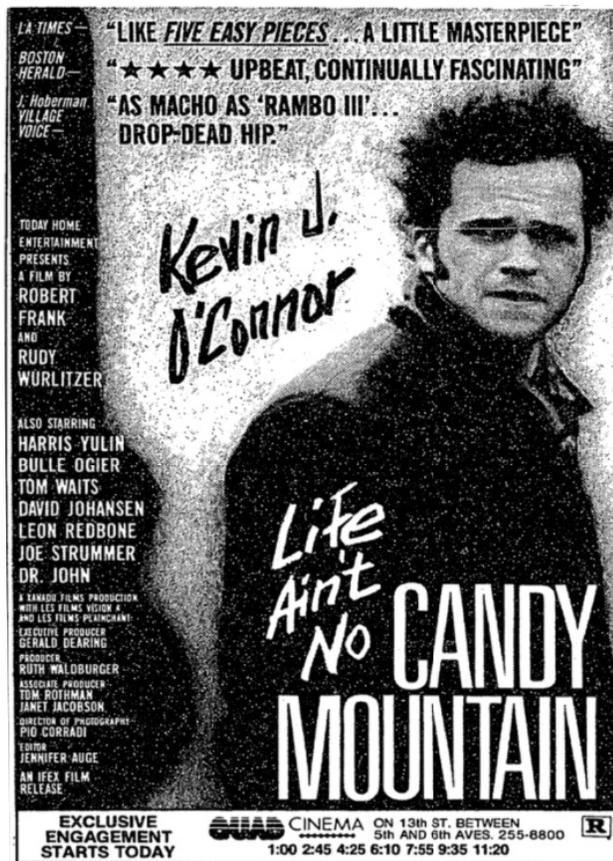


Part-time musician Julius (Kevin J. O'Connor) hits the road in search of the reclusive guitar maker Elmore Silk (Harris Yulin), hoping to make a lucrative deal with Silk and his sought-after guitars. From New York City to Nova Scotia, the film follows the hapless Julius as he tracks a trail of strange acquaintances, friends, and family of the elusive Silk along the American road of the mid-'80s.

In a 2009 conversation with Rodger Jacobs, co-director and screenwriter Wurlitzer recalls the film's production this way: "It was a strange film from the jump, a weird, multiple Low Road co-production with a Swiss producer, a French and an American producer, all of whom didn't get along, and then, of course, the two directors, Robert Frank...and myself, who parted company after the trauma of production. Given the hierarchy of film production, two directors always present a problem. Looking back on it, I probably should have stepped down as co-director, and actually at one point I tried to do so, as it was clear early on that there was room for only one person to walk that bridge and that was Robert."

A music-centered road movie featuring Joe Strummer and Tom Waits naturally brings director Jim Jarmusch to mind; indeed, Jarmusch is often credited as appearing in CANDY MOUNTAIN. In a 2009 interview with Alan Licht, Jarmusch commented on his role: "Yeah, I don't know if I even was shot, I don't remember, I hate to say, so much was going on back then. I remember when they were filming, I was going to be in it, and then I wasn't going to be in it, and I don't remember if they ever filmed me. I know that Robert Frank talked to me at that time before filming about Joe, and Tom Waits, just like, what do you think, do you think I could work with them? He did ask me my opinion about working with a few different people. But I wasn't instrumental in... I mean, Robert Frank is, to me, the godfather of so many different things."

Thanks to its contributions by various musical artists, CANDY MOUNTAIN enjoys a complicated copyright status, and has not had an official commercial release since the days of VHS—a real shame, since this odd, dreamy, stream-of-consciousness road movie is charming, funny, and rewarding in so many ways.



THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 1988

DIRECTED BY ROBERT FRANK & RUDY WURLITZER
WRITTEN BY RUDY WURLITZER
PRODUCED BY LOW ROAD PRODUCTIONS AND XANADU FILMS
(1987) 91 MINS.
STARRING KEVIN J. O'CONNOR, HARRIS YULIN, DAVID JOHANSEN, DR. JOHN, DAVID MARGULIES, LAURIE METCALF, BULLE OGIER, LEON REDBONE, JOE STRUMMER, AND TOM WAITS

DID YOU KNOW: IN ADDITION TO HIS WELL-KNOWN WORK WRITING SCREENPLAYS FOR TWO-LANE BLACKTOP AND PAT GARRETT & BILLY THE KID, RUDY WURLITZER ALSO WROTE TWO OTHER SHORT FILMS FOR ROBERT FRANK: KEEP BUSY (1975) AND ENERGY AND HOW TO GET IT (1982), FEATURING APPEARANCES BY WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS AND DR. JOHN.

NEXT UP: DAVID MAMET'S DIRECTORIAL DEBUT HOUSE OF GAMES IS AN ENTERTAINING BLEND OF FILM NOIR, MYSTERY, PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER, AND DARK COMEDY THAT FOLLOWS A RESPECTABLE PSYCHIATRIST INTO THE SLEAZY WORLD OF CON ARTISTS. IT SCREENS IN 35MM ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 17 AT 7:00 P.M.

FRIDAY APRIL 14, 2017 7:00PM • WHITNEY HUMANITIES CENTER • SPECIAL GUESTS LAURA ISRAEL and NICHOLAS DAWIDOFF

DON'T BLINK — ROBERT FRANK

DIRECTED BY LAURA ISRAEL CINEMATOGRAPHY BY ED LACHMAN & LISA RINZLER (2015) 82 MINS. DCP DISTRIBUTED BY GRASSHOPPER FILM



Documentaries about artists make up a flourishing subgenre these days, but director Laura Israel's *DON'T BLINK — ROBERT FRANK* does something different: as *Los Angeles Times* critic Kenneth Turan noted in his review of the film, “Rather than being a film about an artist, it’s an attempt to show us what it’s like to actually be an artist.” Israel mixes contemporary interviews, passages from Frank’s films, archival footage, and a blistering soundtrack of music by artists including the Velvet Underground, Tom Waits, Bob Dylan, and Patti Smith, to create a sense of who Frank is, how he works, and the impact of his work in both photography and film.

Born in Switzerland and now 92 years old, Frank is best known for his seminal book *The Americans*, published in 1958. The collection, with an introduction by Jack Kerouac, is a distillation in 83 photographs of the two years Frank spent crisscrossing the United States on a Guggenheim Grant, during which time he snapped more than 27,000 photos of every subject imaginable. With both the distance of an outsider and the immediacy afforded by Frank’s quick, hand-held camerawork, he captured America and Americans with an almost shocking understanding of the deeply complicated realities of their lives. As he expressed it in his Guggenheim proposal, he planned to capture what “one naturalized American finds to see in the United States that signifies the kind of civilization born here and spreading elsewhere.” Though it was initially difficult to find an American publisher willing to put out the book, *The Americans* has since become one of the most influential photography books, or creative works in any medium, of all time.

In 1959, just as *The Americans* was published in the United States, Frank swapped his still camera for a motion picture one, and made his first film, *PULL MY DAISY*, with the painter Alfred Leslie. The film featured Allen Ginsburg, Gregory Corso, Peter Orlovsky, and narration by Jack Kerouac. Called “the most truthful American film” by Jonas Mekas, the film is truly a work of independent cinema, and was the first of more than thirty films, some personal, some documentary, some experimental, some narrative—including *CANDY MOUNTAIN* (1987), screening tomorrow night—that Frank would make over the next fifty years.

DON'T BLINK - ROBERT FRANK is, like the films of its subject, surprising, unconventional, and insightful, and through the unprecedented access Israel has to her subject (who complains, “I hate to be photographed. I can’t stand to be pinned in front of a camera. I do that to people, I don’t like it done to me”), she captures something essential about the personality, the life story, and the work of the man writer Nicholas Dawidoff calls “the most influential photographer alive.”