

1515 12th Avenue Seattle WA 98122

**p** 206-329-2629 **f** 206-329-1193

**www.nwfilmforum.org**

 **MARCH 18—MAY 1
RED RENEWAL: SEATTLE’S SOCIALIST SPRING***Presented in partnership with**Town Hall, ARCADE, PubliCola at SeattleMet, Tasveer, DEFA Film Library, Capitol Hill EcoDistrict, The Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies at the University of Washington and Charles Mudede*

*“It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade.”  —Charles Dickens, Great Expectations*

Winter 2013 in Seattle began with changes of pace, both in the weather and for workers. Hardly a raindrop fell in typically dour November, and clear skies greeted Kshama Sawant on the 15th, when she won an historic victory to become the first socialist elected to Seattle City Council in living memory. Ten days later, Washington voters passed a $15 minimum wage for SeaTac workers.

The year wound down while workers got fed up. One hundred fast food workers and supporters marched 13 miles from SeaTac to Seattle City Hall to advocate for the $15 minimum wage. Machinists battled what ([now former](http://seattletimes.com/html/boeingaerospace/2022670013_wroblewskixml.html)) union president Tom Wroblewski called a “piece of crap” benefits-slashing proposal from Boeing. Moved by the machinists’ struggle, Timothy Egan forlornly postulated: ["So this is how the middle class dies. Not with a bang, but with a forced [pension] squeeze."](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/15/opinion/egan-under-my-thumb.html?_r=0)

As 2014 dawned, Sawant decried “the reality of international capitalism” and calling for “organized mass movements of workers and young people” to a thousand citizens who packed City Hall for her inauguration. The same week saw the launch of [15 Now](http://15now.org/), a coalition of community groups and unions, mobilized to make $15 wages a reality first in Seattle, then across the nation.

On Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, “the sign of a rising tide” marched through the city, with many marchers bearing $15 signs to form [“a sea of red”](http://www.king5.com/news/cities/seattle/Minimum-Wage-Faction-at-MLK-Rally-241215421.html) that shone in the sun. Infusing Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy with the rejuvenated fight for fair wages, former head of Seattle’s Black Panther Party chapter Aaron Dixon declared: “We got the power, we are the 99 percent.”

**With *Red Renewal: Seattle’s Socialist Spring*, Northwest Film Forum opens its cinemas for collective contemplation of the 2014 spring fever: sparked by solidarity but marked by uncertainty, as Seattleites debate what the future should hold.**
How will this new season shape the city’s political, economic, and civic landscape? What will happen to workers’ rights and wages, and where will they live in a city gripped by ever sky-rocketing rents? [“Is there something in the water in Seattle”](http://labornotes.org/2013/12/howd-seattle-do-it) that drives the city's labor movement to the forefront of [national conversations](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/05/boeing-labor-contract_n_4543638.html)?Revitalized by newly sown seeds, but a long way off from harvest, this Spring signals a moment ripe for cinematic exploration.

**During Red Renewal, community groups and citizens from across the city will host weekly screenings and discussions around films from many countries, eras and perspectives.** From canonical propaganda to satirical critique, *Red Renewal* recasts cinema’s historical encounters with socialist themes in connection to ongoing conversations about Seattle's economy and politics.

Expect the shouts and songs of workers, Soviet crocodiles and Slovenian psychoanalysts, Gandhi’s teachings melded with Marx’s writings, a renegade East German and the return of Wilhem Reich, radical labors of love and public spheres—both real and virtual—primed for debate. It all begins with a screening and discussion with Kshama Sawant and Charles Mudede at Town Hall on March 18.

**EVENTS DURING RED RENEWAL

MARCH 18, TUESDAY AT 7:30PM**

**Kshama Sawant and Charles Mudede: Why Socialism, Why Now?**

*Presented by: Town Hall, Northwest Film Forum, and 12toRain Productions, as part of the Civics series.*

*Please note: this event is held at Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Avenue at Seneca Street*

Seattle has a socialist on its city council for the first time in 100 years. Kshama Sawant’s recent election raised a lot of questions around the values of the Socialist Alternative Party and her platform of raising the minimum wage to $15. She’ll join Charles Mudede, Associate Editor at *The Stranger*, for an exploration of socialism’s impact on the city council and why, after seeing previous socialist candidates, the city is ready for socialism now. What circumstances made the election of a socialist not only possible, but timely? Living wages and the state of labor in the Puget Sound will also be discussed. Prior to the discussion, enjoy a brief screening to kick off Northwest Film Forum’s series *Red Renewal: Seattle’s Socialist Spring.*

**MARCH 21, FRIDAY AT 8PM**

**THE LAND BEYOND THE RAINBOW**

*New 35mm print!*

*Introduction by author Reinhild Steingröver!*

*Co-presented with DEFA, the East German Film Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst*

*Post-screening reception!*

(Herwig Kipping, East Germany, 1991, 35mm)

In this new director’s cut, renegade East German filmmaker Herwig Kipping set out to explore the roots of the socialist society that he grew up in. Consciousness about pressing social-political issues of GDR life, in his opinion, would not be raised through didactic socialist realist films, but by re-introducing the poetic element into film.

Kipping calls his approach “magical idealism,” emphasizing the need to elevate visuals, metaphorical elements and poetic language over conventional narrative structures and language. Only after the collapse of the GDR regime was Kipping able to realize his script for *The Land Beyond the Rainbow*, which takes place in the fictional town of Stalina in 1953, and depicts a place that lies “beyond the rainbow.”

Representing a radical departure from the East German cinema of the time, Kipping’s influences included Buñuel, Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky, Hölderlin, Tarkovsky and Rilke.

Join us after the screening for a reception, hosted by DEFA, the East German Film Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

**MARCH 26 AT 7PM**

**JARI MARI: OF CLOTH AND OTHER STORIES***Co-presented with Tasveer*

(Surabhi Sharma, India, 2001, 75 min)

Jari Mari is a sprawling slum colony near Mumbai’s main international airport. Its narrow lanes house hundreds of small sweatshops, where women and men work without the right to organize. Their existence is on the edge: their illegal dwellings could be demolished at any time by the airport authorities, and jobs have to be found anew every day, from workshop to workshop. This documentary explores the lives of the people of Jari Mari, and records the changes to the nature and organization of Mumbai’s workforce, over the past two decades.

**Surabhi Sharma**’s films explore music. identity, labor, globalization and women’s health. Her films have screened at various international festivals, and have been awarded at Film South Asia, Nepal; Karachi Film Festival, Pakistan; The Festival of Three Continents, Argentina; Indian Documentary Producers’ Association and Eco-cinema, Greece.

 **APRIL 2 AT 7PM**

**Bogota Cambió**

*Co-presented with Capitol Hill EcoDistrict Project*

(Andreas Møl Dalsgaard, Denmark, 2009, DVD, 58 min)

Out of crisis comes radical experimentation. Few cities have hit rock bottom as Bogota, Columbia did in 1994, ravaged by the violence and corruption of the war on drugs. *Bogota Cambió* tells the story of how two “crazy, extraordinary politicians,” Antanas Mockus and Enrique Peñalosa, road waves of public discontent that enabled them to transform the city, break the old political system and upend approaches to public safety, transportation and the use of public space.

*Bogota Cambió* is also the story of the politician as performance artist and performance as public policy, of mimes, superheroes, and the marriage of extreme contempt with extreme submission. Director Andreas Møl Dalsgaard’s debut film, *Afghan Muscles* (2007) won Best Documentary at the AFI Film Festival.

**APRIL 4-5 AT 11PM**

**The Raspberry Reich***Late night!*

*21+ screening!*

(Bruce LaBruce, Germany/Canada, 2004, Digibeta, 90 min)

Sexual revolution crass meets tongue-in-cheekery, as a terrorist group, led by the militantly sexually liberated Frau Gudrun, sets out to kidnap a bourgeois pig. Bruce LaBruce, one of queer cinema’s bawdiest bad boys, has created a film where plot is secondary to the stylistic critique of both terrorist chic and neoliberal identity politics. *The Raspberry Reich* was inspired by the work of Wilhelm Reich, an early 21st century Marxist psychoanalyst whose theories about cosmic sexual energy led to one of the most remarkable cases of American censorship ever (in which some six tons of his works were burned by order of the court).

Reich’s cinematic legacy ranges from Woody Allen’s *Sleeper* to the sci-fi classic *Barbarella*, but few films have taken up his radical sexual politics so explicitly. Bad acting, elevator sex, handgun fellatio and a problematic trip to Burger King make for scintillatingly crude fun in this kinky counter-culture camp, that borrows as liberally from John Waters as it does Che Guevara.

**APRIL 9 AT 7PM**

**Urban Subversions***Co-presented with PubliCola at Seattle Met
Hosted by Josh Feit*

A tour through movies where urbanism—particularly the electric youth culture fed by city life—is as radical and subversive as Marxism and Anarchism. Agit-prop teens translate music into politics and tech smarts into transgression, upending the government and corporate status quo, in this collection of urban-themed films. Multiculturalism, mass transit and the kismet of streets (all fixed features of cities) also factor in to the revolution at hand.

**APRIL 16 AT 7PM**

**W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism**

(Dušan Makavejev, Yugoslavia, 1971, 84 min)

In what might be the zaniest cinematic rendering of Soviet-Yugoslav-American relations, Serbian maverick Dušan Makavejev employs his characteristic style of associative montage to create a comedic manifesto for sexual revolution. Makavejev collages documentary footage and fiction to create a mashup of American counter-culture, Soviet ideology and Nazi propaganda.

Roger Ebert gave the film four stars and called Makavejev “the most eclectic, eccentric, impenetrable, jolly anarchist to come out of eastern Europe” in the 1960s.

The screening will be followed by a discussion led by Rich Jensen and Allena Gabosch, executive director of the Foundation for Sex Positive Culture

**APRIL 23 AT 7PM
Salt of the Earth**

*Co-presented with the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies at the University of Washington*

(Herbert J. Biberman, USA, 1954, 94 min)

Blacklisted film professionals, with political beliefs deemed too radical in McCarthy-era Hollywood, collaborated with the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers to make this neorealist classic, which follows the struggle of miners and their families (many of them non-actors from the miners union) as they strike against the Empire Zinc Company in New Mexico.

Mexican actress Rosaura Revueltas plays the strong and spirited Esperanza Quintero, wife of strike leader Ramón and herself a gifted labor organizer. Police bigotry, alliances, spies and impassioned picketing lace this lively tale of solidarity: among workers, in the Mexican-American community, between women and men.

Championing feminist ideals and immigration reform decades before these issues received significant national attention, the remarkable historical context surrounding this film makes its continued relevance all the more impressive. Director Herbert J. Biberman, one of the "Hollywood Ten," began production after his release from prison, on a charge of contempt for Congress.

The screening is followed by a discussion with Professor George Lovell, (UW Department of Political Science and Chair of the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies) Professor James Gregory (UW Department of History) and Conor Casey, Labor Archivist.

**APRIL 23 AT 9:30PM**

**A Report on the Party and the Guests**

(Jan Němec, Czechoslovakia, 1966, 35mm, 70min)

In Czechoslovak maverick’s Jan Němec’s most politically charged film, a group of middle-aged bourgeois friends picnic in the woods; soon they are assaulted by thugs who interrogate them, until the party’s host intervenes. This examination of the mechanics of power and the ways people participate was banned in Czechoslovakia by the Communist regime, who rebuffed Němec’s assurances that it was not intended as an allegory of their government.

In collaboration with Ester Krumbachova (who also contributed to the script) and in the visual style of Vera Chytilova’s *Daisies*, Němec’s absurdist yet universal film placed him in the ranks of the Czech avant-garde, and was selected for the 1968 New York Film Festival, in defiance of political pressure at home.

**APRIL 30 AT 7PM**

**High Rise**
*Co-presented with ARCADE and Charles Mudede*

(Gabriel Mascaro, Brazil, 2009, 66 min)

*“What you are doing is great! People only ever want to do documentaries about misery and killings.”*

In High-Rise (*Um Lugar ao Sol*), nine penthouse residents in three of Brazil's largest cities (Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Recife) divulge what it's like to live at the top. Through revealing interviews with the residents, in the comfort of their high-rise lofts, director Gabriel Mascaro exposes a world of wealth gone wild.

The penthouse residents share sentiments that range from elitist to oblivious to bizarre: removed from reality by hundreds of feet of glass and steel, one woman remarks that the *favela* shanties below look like "little dollhouses." Another laughs, "We can talk to God more easily up here."

A contemplation of the neo-liberalization of space emerges from the (almost absurdly) humorous dis-junction between the decadent lifestyles on display, and the tumult of poverty and daily struggle below. *High Rise* ruminates on the role that architecture plays in the socioeconomic as well as physical scaffolding of human relations, as the social stratification of vast urban centers is crystallized through striking images of an upper class perched quite literally above the rest of the world.

**Charles Mudede** *is guest editor of ARCADE’s Spring 2014 issue After Growth: Rethinking the Narrative of Modernization. After the screening, he will lead a conversation connecting the themes of the film and the ARCADE issue.*

**MAY 1 AT 7PM**

**Seattle Labor Chorus**

For International Workers' Day, we wrap up Red Renewal and kick off May Works, a month-long celebration of workers in Seattle, with a performance by the Seattle Labor Chorus, accompanied by worker films, a final community discussion and a proper May Day party.

The Seattle Labor Chorus was formed in March,1997 for a performance at the Northwest Folklife Festival with Pete Seeger. Since then, the chorus has performed for the King County Labor Council, Washington State Labor Council, and many local unions, as well as in concert with folk musician Charlie King.

Recent performances include the 50th anniversary conference of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the AFL-CIO rally to protest the World Trade Organization and the Western Workers Heritage Festival. Directed by Janet Stecher, an experienced vocal performer and recording artist (in the duo Rebel Voices), the chorus is a nonprofit organization dedicated to economic and social justice, and the fundamental right of all workers to organize as a means of securing a living wage.