

A Cinema Guild Release

# CINEMANIA

a film by Angela Christlieb & Stephen Kijak



2002 | 80 min. | Germany

Shot on DV | Dolby SR

English

Stills available at: [www.cinemaguild.com/downloads](http://www.cinemaguild.com/downloads)

**35mm print tour playdates:** [www.cinemaguild.com/cinemia](http://www.cinemaguild.com/cinemia)

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## **synopsis**

*How many times do you have to see a film before you've actually seen it?* —Jack Angstreich

A documentary cult classic, *Cinemia* is an affectionate portrait of five obsessive film goers whose voracious appetite for films has consumed everything else in their lives.

The "cinemaniacs" have seen thousands of movies. They often cannot hold jobs and are on the verge of poverty, but absolutely must watch films day and night, no matter the cost. The "cinemaniacs" reveal not only their lives, but their vast encyclopedic knowledge of cinema, from classic pre-code actresses to the least known science-fiction schlock as well as organizational techniques for coping with the complex scheduling difficulties posed by multiple festivals and special screenings of rarities. The film follows the "cinemaniacs" as they hop from screening to screening across town, calling cinemas to check on the condition of the print. Eric, who also watches video makes an exception among the pack—the other "cinemaniacs" insist on movies and hate television. Sometimes their dreams are movies, they say, perhaps in black and white or CinemaScope.

A fascinating look at the roots of film-addiction, *Cinemia* is an irresistible and hilarious ode to cinephilia for the ages.

## On the re-release of CINEMANIA

When we started this film, the Twin Towers were still standing (you can see them in the background at one point) and you could still run into Roberta Hill ("The Queen of New York Cinephiles") from time to time in any number of cinemas around New York, rushing to her favorite seat or collecting heaps of ephemera—posters, programs, flyers, catalogs, and souvenir cups. Roberta passed away a number of years ago. A lovely tribute was held at one of her favorite cinemas, Anthology Film Archives. She would have loved the emergence of new screens in New York like the Alamo Drafthouse and Metrograph. When we were making *Cinemanía*, it seemed we were chronicling the last of a dying breed, inhabiting spaces that also seemed headed for extinction. Bill has since decamped to Paris to live out his cinephile dreams. Harvey popped up in Los Angeles recently at the premiere of my latest film; he had to relocate after his mother passed away. We've lost track of Eric but I have learned that Jack started writing about film for some online publications—something he swore he would never do. (You can find an excellent archive of his work on The Film Festival Traveler website.)

*Cinemanía* was, in many ways, a gift. I never sought to become a documentarian. This film found me—thanks to my co-director Angela—and pointed me in a decisive direction. I have never stopped learning from this film, from the worlds of our subjects and their obsessive focus on the moving image. Everything I have done since has been informed by some lesson I learned while making this film. I'm thrilled that it is being made available again and I hope its cult status continues to grow, that it continues to inform and entertain and educate. I hope the film shines a light in the darkened room and ignites a passion for moviegoing in future generations, no matter how extreme. In the immortal words of Roberta Hill: "We all have to go to extremes once in a while."

### —Stephen Kijak

*Cinemanía* was a gift, a trip, an experience. It changed my life completely. I'm still grateful for the opportunity to work together with Stephen who had the same spirit and the same ideas. Exploring the lives of our five cinephiles sharpened the experience of watching movies and made me value the medium of film in its purest form. I could never watch a dubbed movie now and I'm still very sensitive to noise in theaters. I'm always having these Jack moments, where I want to rip popcorn out of people's hands!

Although film culture has changed a lot and watching films on the internet has eclipsed viewing films in theaters, I know that there are still true cinemaniacs all over the world who live through cinema in their daydreams.

Last year at the Berlin International Film Festival, I sat next to a lady who refused to give up the seat on the other side of her on which she had all her bags and things, even though the theatre was completely packed. The ushers got very upset and I couldn't help smiling to myself thinking that Roberta had come back to watch the movie next to me. I'm very happy that *Cinemanía* will be shown in theaters again so future generations might get addicted to film as much as we did.

### —Angela Christlieb

## reviews

"A crisp, intelligent film." —*The New York Times*

"A breezy study of movie love at its most dementedly committed." —*The Village Voice*

"This fascinating documentary suggests that movie love may be a certifiable disease." —*LA Weekly*

"We loved it! These characters have clearly crossed over some line and can no longer be considered normal or sane. After watching your film, we are ready to cross that line ourselves." —D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus

"Cinemia offers a drily funny but sympathetic insight into a world where benign fandom teeters just on the right side of fanaticism." —*Empire*

"What Christlieb and Kijak do so well is keeping these folks from not seeming like loons." —*The Boston Globe*

"A funny and affectionate documentary—Woody Allen would be accused of gross exaggeration if he invented these people as characters for one of his films." —*Screendaily*

## credits

a feature documentary by Angela Christlieb & Stephen Kijak

A Hanfgarn & Ufer Production  
in association with Loop Filmworks and  
Wellspring Media

funding provided by Filmboard Berlin-  
Brandenburg and Filmstiftung Nordrhein-  
Westfalen.  
in Coproduction with Bayerischer Rundfunk and  
WestDeutscher Rundfunk

### **The Cinephiles:**

Jack Angstreich  
Eric Chadbourne  
Bill Heidbreder  
Roberta Hill  
Harvey Schwartz

### **Produced by**

Gunter Hanfgarn

### **Directed by**

Angela Christlieb & Stephen Kijak

### **Camera**

Angela Christlieb

### **Edited by**

Angela Christlieb & Stephen Kijak

### **Theme song "Cinemanía" by**

Stereo Total

### **Music by**

Robert Drasnin & Stereo Total

### **Sound**

Mario Pego  
Manuel Lopez  
Jennifer Packard  
Heiko Schendel  
Dietmar Post

### **Additional camera (closing sequence)**

Gaetan Rousseau

### **Still Photographer**

Tanya Braganti

### **Intern**

Tasheka Josephs

### **Film Stills**

J.C. Archives

### **Film Clips**

Archive Films/Getty Images

### **Additional Footage**

produced and directed by Angela Christlieb &  
John Mhiripiri

### **Sequences originally produced for "Split Screen"**

courtesy of John Pierson & Grainy Pictures  
camera: Dean Slotar, Ben Speth

### **Post Production Facility - Berlin**

Gaffer & Grip

### **Post Production Facility - Dusseldorf**

Hektor Rydzewski Bild+Ton Production

### **On-line editor**

Carsten Schmidt

### **Sound Mix**

Tom Blankenburg

### **Associate Producer - NYC**

Avi Zev Weider

### **Opening sequence, titles and animation**

LOOP Filmworks

### **Designed and Animated by**

David Chartier