

24th International Short Film Symposium | Thursday, 23 April 2015



Det perfekte menneske
The Perfect Human
Director: Jørgen Leth
Denmark, 1967, 13 min.

Det perfekte menneske/The Perfect Human is one of the best known and most remarkable experimental films of the 20th century. Unfortunately, a new shoot in Paris prevents Jørgen Leth from joining us but the film will be shown and commented upon by Professor Søren Birkvad, who teaches in the Film and Television Studies Programme at Lillehammer University College, and who has written a book about Jørgen Leth's work.

ABSTRACTS OF ARTICLES IN SHORT FILM STUDIES 5.2

1. The Fall of Perfect Man

Although it seems loose and open-ended, *The Perfect Human* is a myth of modernism. It turns a 'scientific' look at Man and Woman into the thrill of voyeurism before it stops at a point of disturbing meta-consciousness: a fall in Pop Art Paradise.

- Søren Birkvad, Lillehammer University College

2. The Perfect Human: An Avant-Garde Rebellion against Classical Hollywood Style

This essay seeks to position Jørgen Leth's *The Perfect Human* as an avant-garde challenge to Classical Hollywood film style as well as mine the film's abstract appeal in its invention of new methodologies to generate meaning.

- Derek Dubois, Rhode Island College

3. Mimicking and mocking the aesthetics and philosophy of abstraction: *The Perfect Human*

The Perfect Human may be read as using and subverting both 1960s aesthetic and age-old philosophical strategies of abstraction. Its awareness of differences of class, age and gender in particular serves to question aesthetic-philosophical assumptions concerning the interdependence of abstraction, 'chromophobia' and the idea of perfection.

- Paul Coates, University of Western Ontario

4. A Hunger for the Human

The film tempts a formalist reading: that the human is perfect when, thanks to the camera's intervention, it doesn't appear in the world. Yet Leth's aim is not to confirm this modern ideal of human self-sufficiency; rather, he exiles the human on film to expose our hunger for the world.

- Naomi Beeman, Kansas City Art Institute

5. *The Perfect Human* and 'modern cinema'

While this film has been described as 'modern' in terms of its style and structure, approaching the film as 'modern cinema' in the terms defined by Richard Rushton (2004) allows us to consider the effects of its deliberate disjunction between 'theatricality' and 'absorption', or an exhibitionistic and a voyeuristic regime.

- Paula Quigley, Trinity College Dublin

6. What is anthropological about *The Perfect Human*?

Jørgen Leth has classified *The Perfect Human* as an Anthropological Film. But is the film anthropological at all? This article explores Leth's connections with anthropology and finds that he is more inspired by anthropological framing than he is by anthropological research methods.

- Line Hassall Thomsen, Aarhus University