



WOMEN, ORGANISE!

Homemcr.org

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#WomenatHOME

#WomenOrganise

Norma Rae, 1976

WOMEN, ORGANISE!

Women, Organise! focuses on a variety of representations of women's activism and involvement in trade unionism. In doing so it seeks to raise questions about women's roles in the workplace, how they have struggled to organise themselves and the ways in which their experiences have been shown on screen.

When putting the season together it was important to reflect the wide variety of styles that have been used in this work. Therefore, it is hoped that the final selection offers not only a range of subjects but also a mixture of formal approaches that in combination show how there really is not one simple way to cover this area on screen.

As would be expected **Women, Organise!** contains a number of documentary films that cover particular campaigns and historical moments. These include the double bill of *I am Somebody* (1970) and *Red Skirts on Clydeside* (1984), a screening of the Berwick Street Collective's challenging documentary *Nightcleaners* (1974), and the recent Lebanese work *A Feeling Greater than Love* (2017). All four works revealing that, even in the field of the documentary film, the way in which the filmmakers communicate their ideas can include a radically different set of aesthetic choices.

As the season is part of HOME's wider celebration of women in global cinema across 2019, it also offers fiction films that offer reflections on women's experiences in the workplace from around the world. These include Ken Loach's US-set *Bread and Roses* (2000), inspired by the 'justice for janitors' campaign, and the Korean supermarket-set drama *Cart* (2014).

Also in the field of fiction film, the season also includes some of those rare examples of Hollywood films that offer a sympathetic view

of organised labour. The level and type of sympathy offered is of course open to debate and discussion. Hence the inclusion of the Doris Day vehicle *The Pajama Game* (1957), alongside the more obviously political dramas *Norma Rae* (1979) and *North Country* (2005).

In the UK during the 1970s, due partly to a sharp decline in film production, a great deal of the most politically engaged drama was produced for television. The 1974 BBC *Play for Today* *Leeds-United!* included in **Women, Organise!** is a great example of this work, with its political ambitions in terms of both its form and content reflecting this fact.

Another aim of this season is to spark discussion and debate. Many of the films included tackle issues still relevant today, and supporting events include a number of introductions and post-screening discussions that it is hoped will encourage audiences to share their thoughts about what they have seen. In addition, we are pleased to welcome some of those who worked on the films to discuss their work with audiences in post-screening Q&A sessions.

Of course, support for such seasons is vital, and HOME partners with a range of organisations when putting them together. In the case of **Women, Organise!** we have been really lucky to work with the General Federation of Trades Unions' Education Trust in this their 120th year. The films in this season remind us of how vital workers' struggles have been over the years and the central role trades unions have played in that fight.

Andy Willis, Senior Visiting Curator: Film at HOME and Professor of Film Studies, School of Arts and Media at the University of Salford.



Bread and Roses, 2000



Bread & Roses, 2000

BREAD & ROSES (15)

Sat 4 May, 18.00

Dir Ken Loach/GB US 2000/110 mins

Pilar Padilla, Adrien Brody, Elpidia Carrillo
Ken Loach ventures to the US to make a film inspired by the 'justice for janitors' campaign. The film centres on the experiences of Maya, a Mexican migrant worker whose work experiences lead her to become involved in the struggle to unionise the workforce. Screening from a 35mm print.

D.N.W SHORT FILMS

Sat 4 May - Sun 10 May

A series of guerrilla artworks created to mark 100 years since the Representation of the People Act was passed. Motivated by the call to action 'deeds not words' adopted by the pioneering Suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst, these artworks live on in a series of short films that celebrate heroines of the past and aim to energise a new wave of activists with a shared vision for gender equality.

As part of our Women, Organise! season we screen this series of short films alongside our main programme.

D.N.W. Chapter 1 – *Be watchful...we move in the shadows* with *Bread and Roses* on Sat 4 May (p2)

D.N.W. Chapter 2 – International Women's Day with *The Pajama Game* on Sun 5, Tue 7, Wed 8 May (p3)

D.N.W. Chapter 3 – *Rise up!* with *Cart* on Fri 10 May (p15)



D.N.W Short Films

PLAY FOR TODAY / LEEDS - UNITED! (CTBA) + INTRO

Sun 5 May, 15:30

Dir Roy Battersby/GB 1974/116 mins

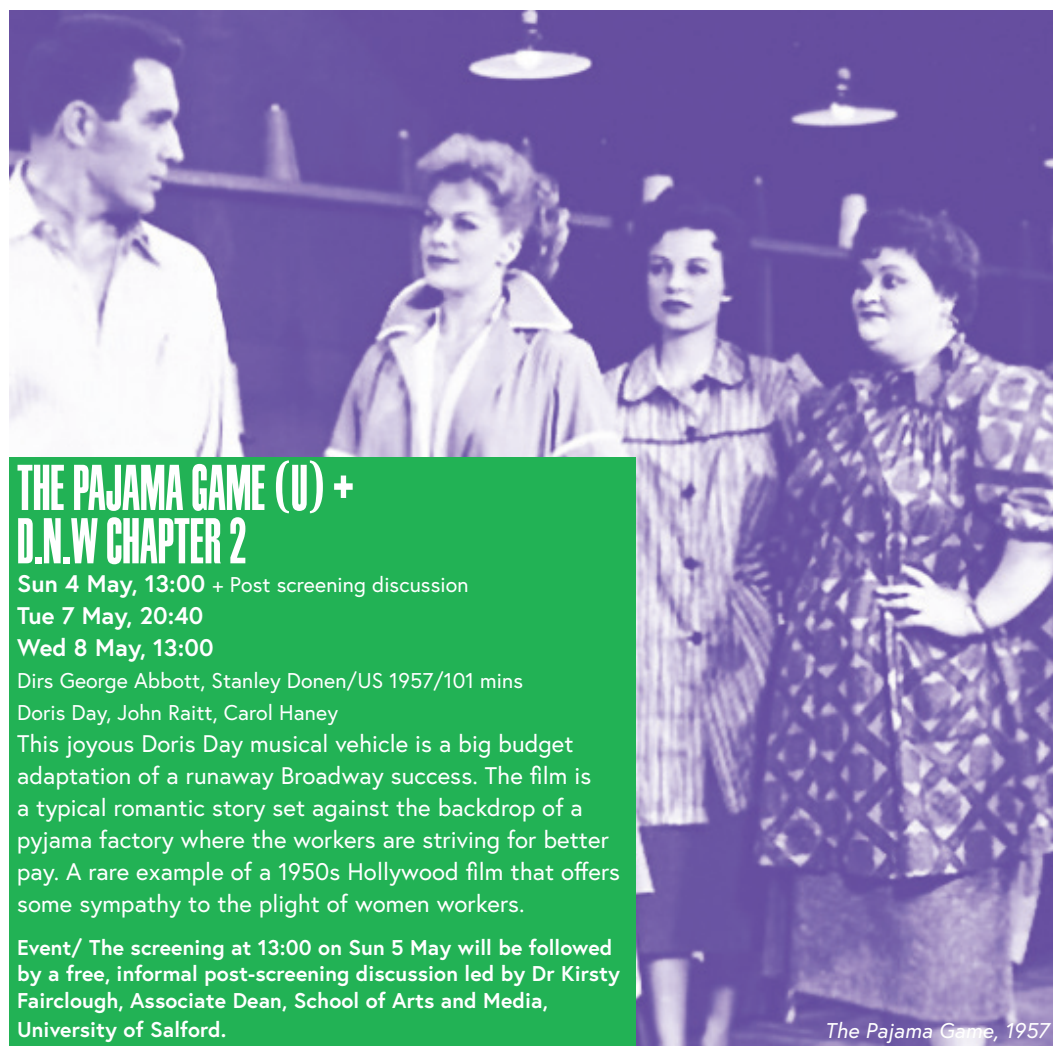
Lynne Perrie, Elizabeth Spriggs, Lori Wells

Based on real events that took place in 1970 and originally broadcast in 1974, this expansive BBC television drama focuses on the collective action of female workers in the textile trade in Leeds as they campaign for equal pay.

Event/ This screening will be introduced by season curator Andy Willis.



Play For Today / Leeds - United!, 1974



The Pajama Game, 1957

THE PAJAMA GAME (U) + D.N.W CHAPTER 2

Sun 4 May, 13:00 + Post screening discussion

Tue 7 May, 20:40

Wed 8 May, 13:00

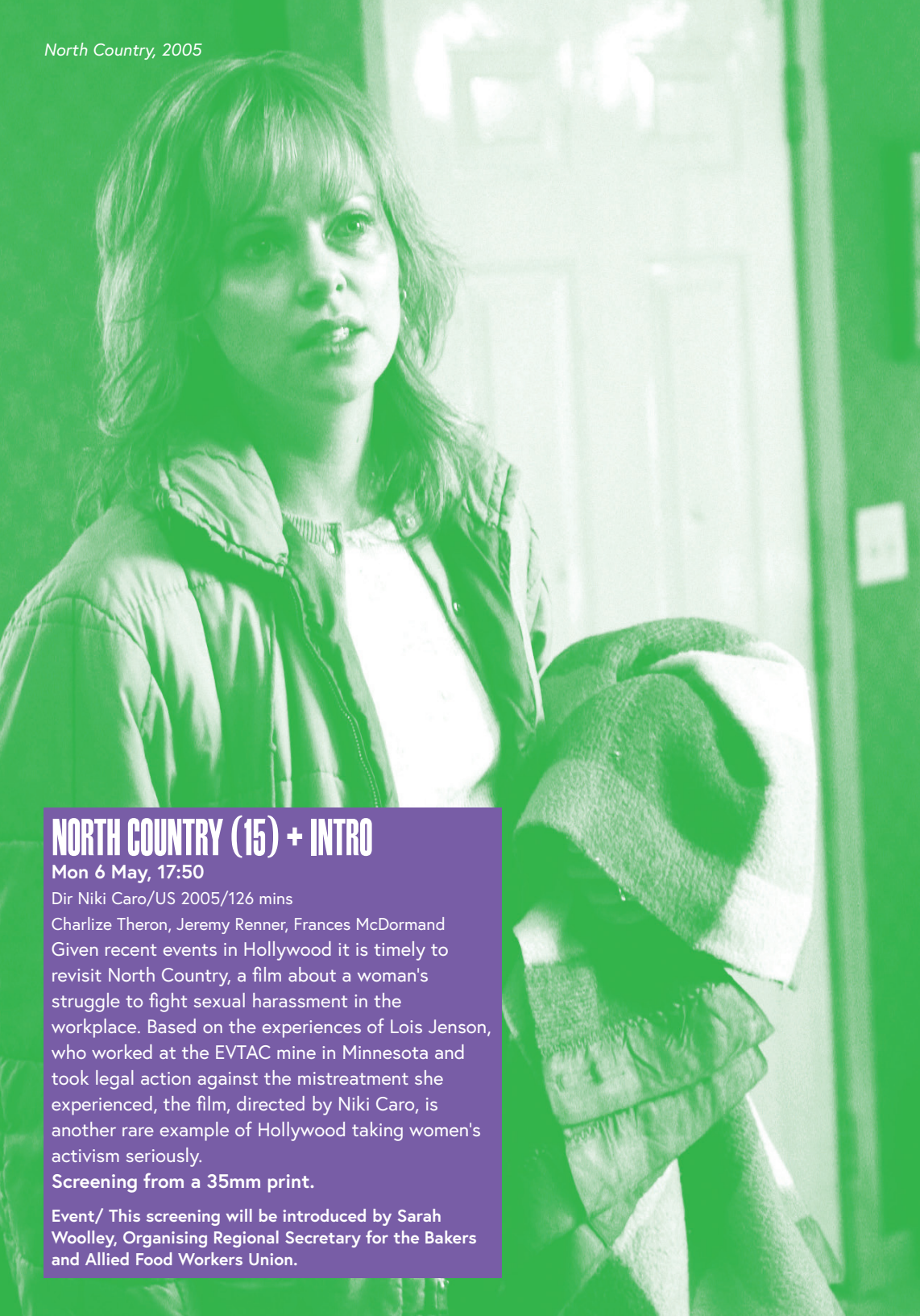
Dirs George Abbott, Stanley Donen/US 1957/101 mins

Doris Day, John Raitt, Carol Haney

This joyous Doris Day musical vehicle is a big budget adaptation of a runaway Broadway success. The film is a typical romantic story set against the backdrop of a pyjama factory where the workers are striving for better pay. A rare example of a 1950s Hollywood film that offers some sympathy to the plight of women workers.

Event/ The screening at 13:00 on Sun 5 May will be followed by a free, informal post-screening discussion led by Dr Kirsty Fairclough, Associate Dean, School of Arts and Media, University of Salford.

North Country, 2005



NORTH COUNTRY (15) + INTRO

Mon 6 May, 17:50

Dir Niki Caro/US 2005/126 mins

Charlize Theron, Jeremy Renner, Frances McDormand
Given recent events in Hollywood it is timely to revisit North Country, a film about a woman's struggle to fight sexual harassment in the workplace. Based on the experiences of Lois Jenson, who worked at the EVTAC mine in Minnesota and took legal action against the mistreatment she experienced, the film, directed by Niki Caro, is another rare example of Hollywood taking women's activism seriously.

Screening from a 35mm print.

Event/ This screening will be introduced by Sarah Woolley, Organising Regional Secretary for the Bakers and Allied Food Workers Union.

The NightCleaners, 1975



THE NIGHTCLEANERS (CTBA) + Q&A

Mon 6 May, 15.40

Dir Berwick Street Film Collective/GB 1975/90 mins

Increasingly seen as a key work of British political cinema, this feature-length, self-reflexive documentary from the Berwick Street Collective explores the struggle to unionise the women workers who clean office blocks at night and who as well as being unpaid are often victimised.

Event/ This screening will be followed by a Q&A with filmmaker Humphry Trevelyan.

1799 - 1800

Combination Acts outlaw 'combinations' - early trade unions.

1824

Repeal of Combination Acts de-criminalises trade unions.

1830

John Doherty, leader of the Manchester Spinners Union, forms the National Association for the Protection of Labour (an early attempt to organise all workers in a single union).

1842

General Strike (sometimes called 'Plug Plot Riots').

1847

Workers' campaign for reduced working times results in 'Ten Hour Act'.

1850S - 60S

Growth of 'new model unionism' representing highly skilled workers.

1868

Manchester & Salford Trades Council convenes the first Trades Union Congress (TUC).

1874

Formation of Women's Protection & Provident League (Later the Women's Trade Union League).

1888

Matchwomen's strike at Bryant & May. First equal pay resolution moved by Clementina Black.

1888 - 1918

Trade Unionism spreads to semi-skilled, unskilled, white collar and professional workers, but only 10% of union members are women.

1910 - 1914

The 'Great Unrest'. Extensive industrial unrest (internationally as well as in UK).

1914 - 1918

During First World War women's trade union membership increases by almost 100%.

1918

Women tramway workers strike for (and win) equal pay.

1920

1,342,000 women workers belong to trade unions (25% of female workforce), but by 1939 this had fallen to 1,000,000.

1925

TUC establishes Women's Conference.

1926

General Strike.

1930

TUC establishes a Women's Advisory Committee.

1930'S

Trade Union movement divided between those who see women workers as a threat (and seek to curb or prevent female employment) and those who seek to recruit women workers.

1939 - 1945

During Second World War trade union membership increases from around 3.5 million to 7.5 million.

1945 - 1979

Period of increasing trade union membership, peaking at 13 million members (55% of the total workforce) in 1979. During this period women's trade union membership almost doubled from 2 million in 1960 to just under 4 million in 1979.

1968

Dagenham sewing machinists strike for equal pay, celebrated in film *Made in Dagenham* (2010).

1970

Labour government passes Equal Pay Act (in 2017 women workers were still being paid on average 14.1% less than men).

1976

Trico strike, 400 women went on strike for 21 weeks to win equal pay.

1976 - 1978

Grunwick strike, mostly involving women workers of South Asian origin.

1979 - 1990

Successive Conservative governments pass 5 major pieces of legislation aimed at making it more difficult for workers to take strike action.

2017

Trade Union Act requires a turn-out of at least 50% of eligible members and a majority for strike action in order for a strike to be lawful.

If you want to find out more about trade union, women's, and labour history, the following are good places to start:

The People's History Museum:
www.phm.org.uk

The Working-Class Movement Library: www.wcml.org.uk

A HISTORY OF GTFU

The General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) is a national trade union centre in the United Kingdom. It has 35 affiliates with a membership of just over 214,000 and describes itself as the "federation for specialist unions"

Solidarity: Formed in 1899 to set up a strike fund to ensure that workers would not be starved back to work by employers, the General Federation of Trades Unions (GFTU) has always sought to provide practical solidarity to workers.

Internationalism: In the early 20th Century the GFTU played a key role in developing international trade union relations. Its commitment to internationalism continues in its work with various international partners including; Solidar, Union Solidarity International, Global Labour Institute, Encuentro Sinidical Nuestra America, and the Interational Federation of Workers' Educational Associations.

Education: Since the 1960s the GFTU has expanded its educational activities. It concentrates on helping unions build a new generation of skilled leaders, engaging young workers in new ways, and passing on knowledge of the tremendous history of our movement.

Culture: The GFTU believes that culture has a vital role to play in political and economic struggle. It believes that culture should belong to everyone and is particularly keen to celebrate working-class culture. In 2018, it organised the Liberating Arts Festival and published the first volume of *Workers Play Time*, a collection of plays born out

A HISTORY OF TRADE UNIONS

A FEELING GREATER THAN LOVE (CTBA) *SHU'OUR AKBAR MIN EL HOB

Tue 7 May, 18:10

Dir Mary Jirmanus Saba/LB 2017/99 mins/Arabic wEngST

A powerful meditation on revolution and cinema, this 2017 documentary takes the death of a young woman killed during a Lebanese factory strike in the 1970s as its starting point to ask questions of the activists of the time, and to explore the possibilities for militant action in film and society.

Event/ This screening will be introduced by Dr Molly Geidel, Lecturer in 20th Century US Cultural History at the University of Manchester.



DIRECTOR STATEMENT

On July 11, 2011, I received this email from Nadine, who became one of the film's protagonists. Listening to her speak about the 1972 uprising and the revolution it almost launched, she could be voicing the thoughts of my own generation, our hopes for the potential of the Arab Spring.

For me, the same questions linger, about past and present, about Lebanon, the Middle East and beyond: What produced those moments of seeming revolutionary possibility, and why did the revolution fail? Are we repeating the same gestures of popular movement, and do they bring us closer to justice and equality? Today, what to do with such desire for change and unity?

I began my research in 2010 in a time of relative apathy. Returning to Lebanon after working as a farmworker organizer and community television producer in Latin America, I wondered why our own, Arab social movements paled in comparison. Looking to the past, the Gandour and tobacco farmer strike emerged—linked in popular memory as the cusp of revolutionary possibility and social unity in Lebanon in 1972-73, right before the country devolved into civil war. Following the trail of Fatima, a girl whose death at the hands of Lebanese police galvanized the nation, I searched for the answers to my questions.

The film proceeds as if in a dream, through the memories of our main characters, their personal stories of political involvement and disillusionment. An exploration of the past and its traces today in the gestures of everyday life.

"I was wondering if I might die before someone remembered the Gandour strike, and it even occurred to me that I had dreamt it altogether."

Mary Jirmanus Saba

DOUBLE BILL/ I AM SOMEBODY RED SKIRTS ON CLYDESIDE (CTBA)

Wed 8 May, 18.30

Dir Various/ US GB 1970 & 1984/68 mins

These two documentaries represent the vital role women have played in working class struggle and resistance.

I Am Somebody

Dir Madeline Anderson/US 1970/28 mins

Stirring 29 min documentary about 1969 hospital workers strike in Charleston, South Carolina. Many of the workforce who sent on strike were black women and the film captures their sacrifices, solidarity and determination not to be cowed by the system.

Red Skirts On Clydeside

Dirs Jenny Woodley, Christine Bellamy/GB 1984/40 mins

Driven by a desire to uncover often forgotten or ignored women's histories, this documentary from the Sheffield Film Cooperative follows the attempts to discover the story of women's activism during the Glasgow rent strikes of 1915.

Event/ This screening will be introduced by Selina Robertson and Sarah Wood from queer feminist collective Club des Femmes.

Club des Femmes x HOME

Wed 8 May 2019

We are Club des Femmes: a queer feminist film collective. Since 2007 we have worked to bring films framed by intersectional feminist politics to a contemporary audience, often reintroducing and re-contextualising work by women whose films explore feminist activism and, in a mirror to our communal ethos, discuss the potential for different strategies for collective organisation for cultural and political change.

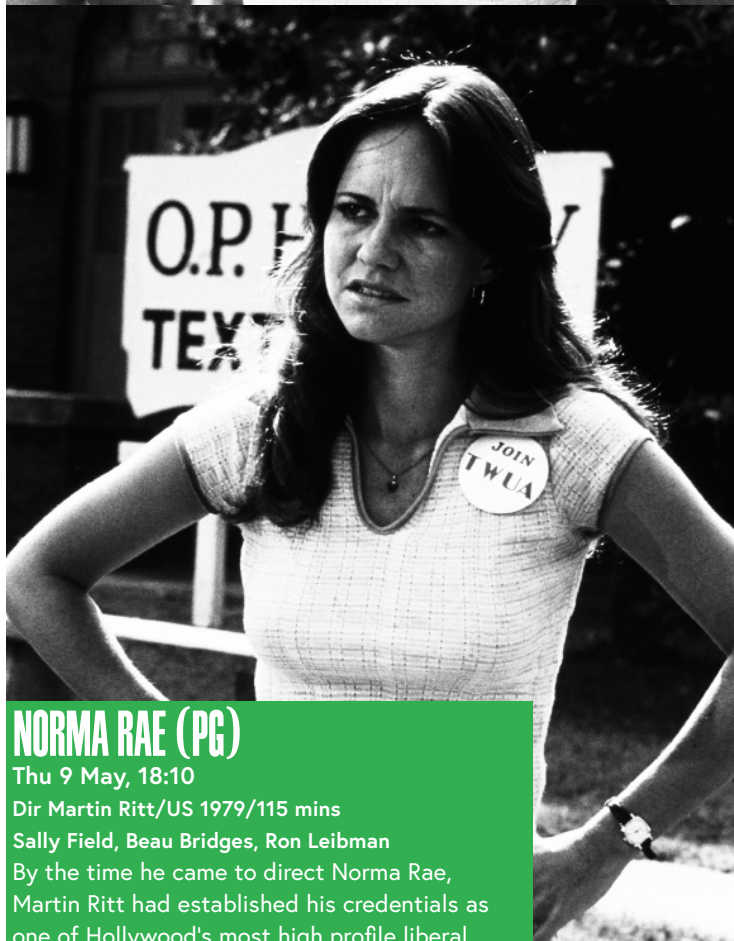
Our focus will be on the way women workers/ feminists have and continued to organise themselves collectively both in politics and art. How moving image can be used as a political and aesthetic tool for change. In the spirit of feminist militancy and union politics, we revisit two key feminist documentary films from the 1970s and 1980s. The first African-American woman to executive-produce a nationally aired television series, Madeline Anderson's landmark civil rights documentary I am Somebody (1970), is a riveting account of the 1969 strike of black hospital workers in Charleston, South Carolina. The Sheffield Film Co-op's Red Skirts on Clydeside (1984) brilliantly recovers women's political, material and labour histories, using the 1915 Glasgow rent strike as a focal point. We love the interviews with women about their memories of Socialist organisations in Glasgow, and also for their fabulous array of cardigans. These women know how to knit!

Connecting transnational women's political histories, the labour movement and the relationship between documentary filmmaking and the women's movement, we will present a new Club des Femmes short that uses footage of the women's strike against the Vietnam War, observing the stages of how demonstrating works, the political struggle. Our aim for this screening will be to invite dialogue and generate a legacy so that women organisers' past actions, feminist histories and diverse voices can come together with experimentation in the moving image in relevance to open the possibilities for future imaginings.

As always please keep in touch!

Club des Femmes x
www.clubdesfemmes.com

Norma Rae 1977



NORMA RAE (PG)

Thu 9 May, 18:10

Dir Martin Ritt/US 1979/115 mins

Sally Field, Beau Bridges, Ron Leibman

By the time he came to direct Norma Rae, Martin Ritt had established his credentials as one of Hollywood's most high profile liberal directors. His Oscar-nominated film follows Sally Field's titular character as she attempts to bring the union to the factory where she works.

Event/ This screening will be accompanied by an introduction and post-screening discussion from season curator Andy Willis.

CART (KA-TEU) (CTBA)+ D.N.W CHAPTER 3

Fri 10 May, 18:10

Dir Boo Ji-young/KR 2014/110 mins/Korean wEngST

Yum Jung-ah, Moon Jung-hee, Kim Yeong-ae

Bu Ji-young's topical drama explores the plight of Korea's temporary workers. Sun-hee is a temporary worker and model employee space at a supermarket. However, when she and other non-contract workers are abruptly laid-off they begin a strike. As their action progresses, the women realise they have much more resilience and determination than they thought.



Cart, 2014

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*All films have to be booked at the same time to receive discount.

Number of Films	Discount off each ticket
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5-9	£1.50

A 10% discount is available for Trade Union Members with a valid ID. Please visit homemcr.org/women-organise for more info or enquire at our box office.

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This zine was designed by Maisie Hambleton, as part of Celebrating Women In Global Cinema. #WomenAtHOME