

introduction: re-energizing the film archive

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The six film programmes (and two late-night screenings) accompanying the Prometheus Summer School on energy do not merely illustrate the lectures. In fact, that would be impossible: energy would yield only a relatively small sample of films entirely and purposefully devoted to this theme. And most of those films would be commercials or sponsored films (industrials, propaganda, etc.). Surely, these could be shown, one after the other, but whether such a screening would make an attractive, effective programme is another matter altogether. And that constitutes another impossibility. A programme, after all, is more than just one film followed by another. So, the challenge of putting these screenings together was to make varied and meaningful sequences of films, necessarily including many which were never made to deal explicitly with energy-related matters. In fact, by combining films from various times and on various topics we hope to have suggested meaningful links - links often quite literally unforeseen by their producers as well as their contemporary audiences.

The reason we were in a position to proceed in this way is that the majority of the films selected come from one film archive: Eye-Film Instituut Nederland (formerly the Nederlands Filmmuseum), in Amsterdam. An archive allows one to research, browse, select, and combine materials that are difficult to access elsewhere. Naturally, today's dvd-productions and sites like YouTube allow us to browse an amount of moving images unimaginable only a couple of years ago. But for putting together a programme that takes visual quality into consideration, such sources are insufficient. In a couple of years, the Film Instituut Nederland, currently at the forefront of digital developments and transferring a significant sample of its films on high quality digital resolution (4K), will be able to revitalize its holdings by allowing better and broader access, including digital

projection. For the time being, however, film prints generally remain the best source materials. So we are proud to present, here in Europe's 2010 Cultural Capital, a large number of our prints in new ways. The unusual commission of the Prometheus Summer School – films on energy – is, in fact, an opportunity to re-energize the archive through programming.