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217 Films

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New documentary film celebrates the 50th anniversary of the U.S. premiere of the groundbreaking BBC television series *Civilisation*

ASHFORD, CONNECTICUT (January 28, 2018) – Connecticut-based independent filmmakers Michael Maglaras and Terri Templeton of 217 Films announce a new film project – their eighth in 12 years and their seventh “essay in film” – highlighting the impact that Lord Kenneth Clark’s epic thirteen-part television series *Civilisation* had on America and Americans in 1969...as we struggled with our national conscience during the Vietnam War.

The film is titled “*Civilisation* and America: The 50th Anniversary” and is scheduled for release in March 2019.



Lord Kenneth Clark, film still from “Man: the Measure of All Things,” *Civilisation*. Courtesy of the BBC.

“Many of us who experienced *Civilisation* when it was first shown on public television have never forgotten its profound influence,” said Michael Maglaras, writer and director of this 50th anniversary tribute. “What resonated for me was Lord Clark’s perspective on the permanence of Western culture, and how it could serve as an example of a stabilizing force, at a time, in 1969, when I and many in America felt that our country was coming apart at the seams.”

Civilisation, produced by the BBC, had its first United States screening at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. in the fall of 1969, thanks to the vision of its then director J. Carter Brown, and was quickly taken up as one of the first important television programs of what was then the new Public Broadcasting Service. Fifty years later, and with an America facing new political and social challenges, Lord Kenneth Clark’s thirteen hours of *Civilisation* reminds us not only of the permanence of art and the permanent value of the human spirit in its creation...but of the value of institutions, and Clark’s belief that society “must be made to work.” Featuring interviews with Americans whose lives were affected by *Civilisation* and by the series’ brilliant writing, camera work, and innovative use of music...and using archival footage of an America struggling with itself during the height of the Vietnam War, “*Civilisation* and America” reminds us yet again of the value of the arts in American society and in the lives of American citizens.



Lord Kenneth Clark, 1968. Courtesy of Alamy.



Detail, Michelangelo's *David*. Courtesy of Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence.

More about 217 Films:

217 Films is an independent film company devoted to the American artistic experience. In 2005, Michael Maglaras and Terri Templeton released their first film “Cleophas and His Own” about the American painter Marsden Hartley's epic narrative of love and loss. Maglaras both directed and played the role of Hartley in this film. In 2008, they released a second film about Hartley called “*Visible Silence: Marsden Hartley, Painter and Poet*” – the first-ever documentary on the life of Hartley. In 2010, with their film “John Marin: *Let the Paint be Paint!*” they established, through the first full-length documentary on this important painter, that John Marin was one of the fathers of American Modernism. These films, among other distinctions, have been shown to acclaim at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

In 2012, they released “*O Brother Man: The Art and Life of Lynd Ward*,” and in 2013 “*The Great Confusion: The 1913 Armory Show*.” 2015 saw a new film “*Enough to Live On: The Arts of the WPA*” celebrating the ways in which Franklin Roosevelt used the arts to raise the spirits of the American people during the Great Depression. Their most recent film (2017) is “*America Rising: The Arts of the Gilded Age*” which has just concluded its national tour.

The *Sacramento Bee* called Michael Maglaras a filmmaker of “Bergman-like gravitas.” His films have been described as “virtuoso filmmaking” (*National Gallery of Art*) “alive and fresh” (*Art New England*) and “elegiac and insightful” (*Naples Daily News*). David Berona, author of “Wordless Books” said of “*O Brother Man*” ... “This film is stunning.” A review in *The Dartmouth* said of “*The Great Confusion*” that “Michael Maglaras... brought the drama of the original show back to life.” Trent Nichols of the Virginia Museum of Fine Art has called “*America Rising*” “...mesmerizing and wondrous.”

For more information:

217 Films Website: www.two17films.com

217 Films Blog: www.two17films.blogspot.com

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