This week at CCA (March 22–28), we will be showing a shocking slice of Chilean history in The Settlers. A tale of brutal colonialist actions set against the sweeping, mountainous backdrop of Chile at the turn of the 20th century, director Felipe Gálvez Haberle's film is a handsomely mounted, emotionally wrenching adventure.

In contrast, we’re also offering Butterfly in the Sky, a documentary history of the beloved broadcast triumph in children’s TV programming, Reading Rainbow. The film chronicles the achievements of the broadcasters, educators, and filmmakers behind the series, who believed that television could inspire a lifelong love of reading.

CCA is also holding over About Dry Grasses by Turkish master filmmaker Nuri Bilge Ceylan – a film The Santa Fe Reporter’s Alex De Vore called a “masterpiece.”

CCA’s Amplified series of music docs continues on Tuesday, March 26 with Off the Charts: The Song-Poem Story, a feature-length film about the sometimes unsettling – but always fascinating – song-poem industry subculture.

And on Monday, March 25 at 1pm and 6pm, CCA’s Master Class Series on Film Production begins! I’ll present this first class, Editing - The Relationship Between the Director and Editor, which will compare my editing work for two completely different filmmakers – Errol Morris and Ken Burns.
An excavation of a brutal, buried part of Chilean history

As harrowing as it is humane, *The Settlers* serves as a sharp-edged excavation of long-marginalized history. The film takes place in Chile in 1901. It is Chilean director Felipe Galvez Haberle’s first feature.

*The Settlers* plays off conventions of the American Western while becoming its own haunting work of cinematic historical exploration. The film follows the journey of three men—a reckless British lieutenant, an American mercenary and a mixed-race marksman Segundo—tasked with securing a wealthy landowner’s vast property in Tierra Del Fuego and finding a new trade route. Along the way, however, the mestizo Segundo comes to realize the true nature of their dispatch—to violently "remove" the indigenous population.

"Here beyond men's judgements all covenants were brittle."
—Cormac McCarthy, *Blood Meridian*

Before he died, American novelist Cormac McCarthy saw *The Settlers*. In an Internet post, McCarthy wrote:

*The Settlers*. To me, the closest there is to a *Blood Meridian* film... I saw this one at a film festival ... inspired by true events... Because of the pacing of the film, its atmosphere and its depiction of violence, I think it is safe to say that this one was at least to some degree inspired by the book [Blood Meridian]....I invite you to see this one once it comes out. It's great.”

Here’s what critic Sheila McCarthy (no relation to Cormac) wrote about *The Settlers* in RogerEbert.com:

The word "settle," typically a cozy verb, should probably be retired, at least when it comes to "settling" land. "Settling" is hostile. "Settling" is murderous. Words
matter. Language can clarify, but language can also perpetuate a lie, whitewash ugliness, hide evil by re-naming it. Chilean director Felipe Gálvez Haberle's feature debut is called *The Settlers* for a reason. The film is a searing account of the "settling" of Tierra del Fuego, a borderline area where everything was up for grabs, and lawlessness was the only rule. *The Settlers* is not just an account of historical events, it's a national reckoning with a barbaric past. The fact that *The Settlers* is shot with such piercing beauty intensifies its message.

*The Settlers* had its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in May 2023, competing for the Best First Feature award, the Caméra d'Or. *The Settlers* became the first Chilean production to receive the top prize from the International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI), which represents the national associations of professional film critics and journalists in over 50 countries.

“For all that this Cannes-winning film flirts with the grandeur of spaghetti Westerns, it’s rarely aiming for excitement or even drama in a conventional sense. But there’s integrity to its brutality.” – A. A. Dowd, *IGN Movies*

“This is a film that shows that, as easy as it is to forget about the past, it’s easier still when it was never taught in the first place.”

– Christian Blauvelt, *IndieWire*

“**The Settlers** is a fierce, stark, almost primitive parable of cruelty and power.” – Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*

Film Comment interviewed Galvez about *The Settlers*:

**FC:** You have said that this is a story that has been erased from official histories of Chile. How long have you wanted to tell this story, and when did you formulate the idea of rendering it as a western?

I came across this idea about 15 years ago when I read in independent newspaper accounts of the genocide of Indigenous people. What motivated me was a page from
Chilean history that had been erased and distorted more than others, because that particular population [the Selk’nam, the Indigenous people of Tierra del Fuego] had been turned into images, souvenirs. If you go to the Santiago airport, you can find postcards with photos that are similar to the image in the movie of the man in the forest at night, in ceremonial dress. It could be a stuffed toy or a sticker for a skateboard company, but when that happens it’s important to recognize that it was a genocide and that person was murdered.

The other layer to this is that I love cinema, and so I began to think about how I could narrate this kind of drama from the point of view of those committing the crimes. The idea of making a western comes from thinking of John Ford and American classics. Through that, I came to the conclusion that the western was a tool of colonialism, an element of propaganda, and so I began to cross this story with the idea of the western as a genre of propaganda.

With its evocative period setting and arresting landscapes, The Settlers is a vivid, immersive experience, featuring an indelible final passage that reminds us that the past is always present.

Reading Rainbow honored as important TV history

How many of you have vivid memories of watching Reading Rainbow as a child? Well, CCA is pleased to be showing Butterfly in the Sky, a documentary about this remarkable piece of television history.

Bradford Thomason and Brett Whitcomb’s feature documentary, Butterfly in the Sky, premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2023. It takes audiences behind the scenes of the 1980’s PBS children’s series Reading Rainbow and tells the story of the show’s creators, who believed the small screen could inspire a love of reading. The doc also spotlights the show’s host, LeVar Burton,
and gives an inside look at the challenges he and the show’s creators faced in cultivating a love of reading through television.

“Having both grown up in Texas, Reading Rainbow not only reflected the diverse cultures that surrounded us, but LeVar Burton also introduced us to other worlds in colorful and magical ways,” the directors said in a joint statement. “We believe Reading Rainbow is among the most important shows ever produced and a true unsung hero of children’s programming. It’s important for us to honor its legacy and teach a new generation about this milestone in television history.

To tell the story of Reading Rainbow in Butterfly in the Sky, the directing duo relied on archival footage and interviews with the show’s various co-creators and guest stars including Burton, Whoopi Goldberg, and Reading Rainbow co-creator Twila Liggett. The children’s show, which was on the air for 23 years and spanned 26 seasons, featured guests including Maya Angelou, Susan Sarandon, Jeff Bridges, and James Earl Jones.

“Like millions of kids all over the world I grew up watching and loving Reading Rainbow,” says executive producer Bryn Mooser. “Butterfly in the Sky is such a powerful and joyful reminder of the essential importance of children’s literature.”

“To take a look at Reading Rainbow through the directors’ lens and share this story with audiences everywhere is very special,” says Burton. “I hope audiences walk away with the same warm, fuzzy feeling I did when I watched Butterfly in the Sky for the first time.”

Click Here to Buy Tickets

Grasses film rated 10 out of 10!
In last week’s newsletter I wrote extensively about Turkish master filmmaker Nuri Bilge Ceylan and how his work should be as well known in the United States as it is in Europe. Well, the audience response to About Dry Grasses has been very gratifying, so CCA is holding it over for a second week!
And it didn’t hurt that in *The Santa Fe Reporter* last week, critic Alex De Vore’s headline for his review of *About Dry Grasses* read, “Auteur Nuri Bilge Ceylan digs deep for a three-hour masterpiece.” And he went on, “Though it’s three-hour runtime at first seems like a big ask... *About Dry Grasses* more than justifies its own existence and ultimately proves downright economical thanks to its razor-sharp plot and dialog, mesmerizing performances and art direction so gorgeous that every frame looks like a masterwork.”

And DeVore ended his piece this way: “Ceylan's characters are heartbreakingly human, which means, inherently deeply flawed. And just because it's challenging to dig into the specifics of *About Dry Grasses* doesn't make it any less riveting.” Thank you, Alex, for your eloquent review and for helping get more Santafeans interested in this great director’s work.

**Meet the artists of the song-poem world**

On **Tuesday, March 26 at 6pm**, CCA will be screening the next music doc in our *Amplified* series -- **Off the Charts: The Song-Poem Story**. This feature-length documentary takes you inside the little-known subculture of the song-poem industry. Ordinary people send in their heartfelt, but often bizarre, poems to companies that turn them into full-fledged musical productions for a fee. Advertising in the back of magazines, these companies lure would-be songwriters with promises of fame and fortune.

This peculiar concoction of American commerce, musicianship, and poetic longing create oddly compelling songs that are unlike anything you’ve ever heard. **Off the Charts: The Song-Poem Story** explores the lives and dreams of the songwriters and musicians who operate within this strange world.

CCA’s new Cinema Director Justin Rhody, who chose the film, had this to say: “Off The Charts has been required viewing for any guests at our house for over a decade. This is absolutely one of the most fun and inspiring films I’ve ever seen about a music subculture. This rare screening is definitely not to be missed.”

And my usual reminder...

If you want to see the CCA hit Perfect Days or Io Capitano or Sometimes I Think About Dying, you only have two days left to see them -- on Wednesday, March 27 and Thursday, March 28.

The daily showtimes are:
• Perfect Days – 10:45am, 3:15 and 5:45pm.
• Sometimes I Think About Dying – 1:15 and 8:15pm.
• Io Capitano – 3:30pm.

Join us for CCA’s First Master Class!

And finally, on Monday, March 25 at 1pm and 6pm, CCA is happy to host its first Master Class in Film Production, a series that will provide you with an in-depth, behind-the-scenes look at many different aspects of filmmaking.

We’re beginning with a class that I will teach – Master Class #1 – Editing - The Relationship Between the Director and Editor. The class will compare my editing work for two completely different filmmakers – Errol Morris, for whom I cut The Thin Blue Line – a film that BROKE every rule of editing - and Ken Burns, for whom I cut The Roosevelts: An Intimate History – a film that MAINTAINED every rule of editing!

I’ll screen the opening scene in both films and then tell you about the decisions that the directors and I made for every cut, every image choice, every line of dialog, every sound effect, and piece of
music. I will talk about the role of an editor as a chameleon, getting inside the skin, inside the head of the director to be able to help realize the director’s vision for their film.

These two directors couldn’t be more different in temperament and aesthetics. So, the contrast between the two is very illuminating about the craft of editing. For those of you who know nothing about editing – Master Class #1 – Editing - The Relationship Between the Director and Editor will be an eye opener, I guarantee it!

Since our 6pm class is SOLD OUT, we’ve added a 1pm class so everyone who wants to can attend!

Click Here to Buy Master Class Tickets

Hope to see you at CCA!
So, come join us for another very rich and varied week of cinema!

All the best,

Paul Barnes,
Artistic Advisor, CCA Cinemas