

The **Derek Jarman Lab** is a media research and production centre at Birkbeck offering filmmaking training, support and facilities. Apart from teaching, the Lab is active in organizing events, producing films and encouraging moving image research. Our feature-length documentary [*The Seasons in Quincy: Four Portraits of John Berger*](#) secured theatrical and home video distribution in the UK and US after premiering at the Berlinale in 2016.

We have a passion for sharing filmmaking knowledge and experience and have developed an approach in which the teaching of practical skills is complemented by media theory insights and multidisciplinary collaboration.



At the core of the Lab's teaching is our four day Essay Film Course, which is an introductory course covering basic technical filmmaking competencies as well as some conceptual approaches to incorporating film into academic practice. The course is particularly oriented around exploring the possibilities of the essay film as a distinct mode of filmmaking that is well suited to exploring academic research topics.

The course is designed to be introductory, and no previous knowledge of filmmaking is required. Participants work in small groups and learn how to use widely available DSLR cameras and popular editing software to create professional looking and intellectually engaging videos. By the end of the course they will have completed a short training film. This gives them an opportunity to put their new skills to use immediately and experiment with the form of the essay film in a stimulating environment and with the support of the Lab's team.

Key features of the course include:

- groups of up to 8 participants
- introduction to film theory and the concept of film essay
- tips on production management
- scriptwriting techniques
- hands-on skills in using DSLR cameras, recording sound, lighting set-ups
- editing theory
- editing on Final Cut X or Adobe Premiere Pro



Our courses are designed to cater for a variety of levels of experience and explore a range of ways in which moving images can be used. An integral part of the training is discussing participants' research interests and how film can function in an academic context. We explore the conventions of documentary and fictional filmmaking. But we also open up the question of audiovisual form to investigate the format of the essay film and, more generally, how one can inform, entertain and persuade using the medium of moving images.



Some examples of our collaborations with researchers can be found below:

[Spaces of Psychoanalysis \(2016\)](#)

A number of Birkbeck academics with sustained interests in psychoanalysis talk about the many spaces that psychoanalytical ideas occupy in their lives and research.

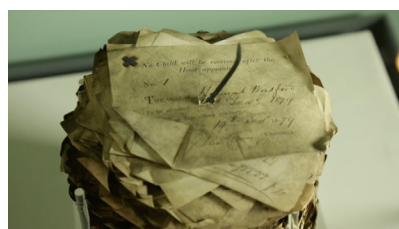


[Twins on Twins \(2017\)](#)

This film about the experience of being a twin is directed by Dr William Viney with the collaboration of a good few twins, and the support of the Leverhulme Foundation.

[The Many Lives of A Shield \(2016\)](#)

Dr Luciana Martins' film responds to contemporary questions of ethnographic objects collected by the botanist Richard Spruce and stored at the Kew Archives.



[Fallen Women \(2016\)](#)

The film made by Dr Lily Ford during an AHRC Cultural Engagement Fellowship at Birkbeck explores the predicament of the unmarried mothers who had their babies taken in by London's Foundling Hospital in the nineteenth century.

[Deciphering Codes \(2017\)](#)

A social media video advertising a new course in Data Science.

