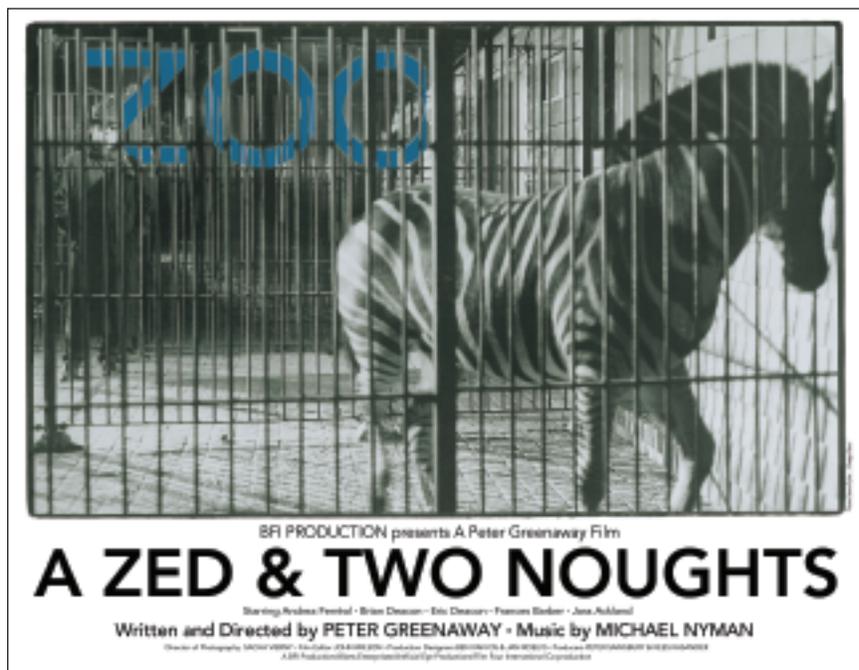




ZEITGEIST FILMS PRESENTS



TWO CLASSIC FILMS BY PETER GREENAWAY



New York publicity:
Harris Dew
212-924-6789
hdew@ifccenter.com

A ZEITGEIST FILMS RELEASE



TWO GREENAWAY CLASSICS

One of the most ambitious and controversial filmmakers of his era, Peter Greenaway had his international critical and commercial breakthrough in 1982 with his 17th-century costume romp *The Draughtsman's Contract*. The film launched him to the forefront of global arthouse cinema. Greenaway would not return to feature filmmaking until 1985, with the superbly stylish *A Zed & Two Noughts*, a provocative and entertaining drama of trauma, obsession, animals, Vermeer and, ahem, list-making.

As the new home for these landmark films, Zeitgeist Films is proud to bring back these cinematic gems to U.S. arthouse screens in 2007.

PETER GREENAWAY

Peter Greenaway embarked on his career as a filmmaker in 1966 at age 24. After graduating from Walthamstow College of Art, he began a long period of employment as a film director and editor at the Central Office of Information, a UK government department responsible for making public information films. Both of these institutions have heavily marked his film work, bringing together a strong visual sense as befits a painter, and an obsessive exploration of the absurdity of bureaucracies and the possibilities or otherwise of the documentary form. These two elements can be seen throughout his early short films.

Throughout his career, as well as making films, Greenaway has remained active as a fine artist, exhibiting paintings at Lord's Gallery in 1964; illustrating three books in 1970 (*The Alphabetical Gang Lion; Gang Lion and the Visual Flush* and *Tulse Luper and the Centre Walk*); producing the *Water Papers* (a set of fifty drawings) in 1974 (exhibited at Arts 38 and Curwen Gallery in 1976) and the paintings and drawings involved in *A Walk Through H* (1978) and *The Draughtsman's Contract* in 1982.

With the making of the astonishingly successful *The Draughtsman's Contract*, Greenaway not only entered the domain of the feature film, but he also helped to change the face of British film itself. Bizarre, intensely personal films were no longer perceived as crazy projects but as commercially viable (with help from the newly established Channel 4). Thus began a long, successful career in which Greenaway's talents and obsession found a platform in films such as *A Zed & Two Noughts; Drowning by Numbers; The Cook, The Thief, His, Wife and Her Lover; Prospero's Books; The Pillow Book* and *The Tulse Luper Suitcases*.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

Intervals (1969)
Windows (1974)
Dear Phone (1976)
H Is for House (1976)
A Walk Through H (1978)
Water Wrackets (1978)
Vertical Features Remake (1978)
The Falls (1980)
The Draughtsman's Contract (1982)
Four American Composers (1983)
Making a Splash (1984)
A Zed & Two Noughts (1985)
26 Bathrooms (1986)
The Belly of an Architect (1987)
Drowning by Numbers (1988)
Fear of Drowning (1988)
The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover (1989)
Prospero's Books (1991)
Rosa (1992)
The Baby of Mâcon (1993)
Stairs 1 Geneva (1995)
Lumière and Company (1996)
The Pillow Book (1996)
8 1/2 Women (1999)
The Death of a Composer: Rosa, A Horse Drama (1999)
The Tulse Luper Suitcases (2003)

THE DRAUGHTSMAN'S CONTRACT

Peter Greenaway became a director of international renown with this witty, stylized, erotic country-house murder mystery. In an apparently idyllic 17th-century Wiltshire, an ambitious draughtsman is commissioned by an aristocrat's wife to produce twelve drawings of her husband's estate, in return for which he will receive payment, board and bed—hers. Extravagant costumes, a twisted plot, elegantly barbed dialogue and a score by frequent Greenaway collaborator Michael Nyman make the film a treat for ear, eye and mind.



"Astonishingly elegant...extraordinarily detailed...mind-bendingly rich.
The Draughtsman's Contract is fun."

—Vincent Canby, *The New York Times*

"Its pleasures do not fade.... One can still marvel at this cerebral romp of a film that combines both 17th-century country house murder mystery with a witty treatise on sex, lies and draughtsmanship. Greenaway fashions this cinematic world with elegant precision—even the shadows and clouds in his film seem to be on as nimble a cue as Michael Nyman's band who play the boisterous score. A playful puzzler to watch over and over, that might just be the aesthete's version of Gameboy."

—*The Guardian* (UK)

"A masterpiece."

—*Time Out London*

"★★★★ What we have here is a tantalizing puzzle, wrapped in eroticism and presented with the utmost elegance. I have never seen a film quite like it. The raw materials of this story could have been fashioned into a bawdy romp like *Tom Jones*. But the director has made a canny choice. Instead of showing us everything, and explaining everything, he gives us the clues and allows us to draw our own conclusions. His movie is like a crossword puzzle for the senses."

—Roger Ebert

"The film is mannered and idiosyncratic; the speeches are so arch and twitty they seem to be pitched higher than a dog whistle, and the people talking are popinjays in perukes shaped as geometrically as the shrubs at Marienbad."

—Pauline Kael

"*The Draughtsman's Contract* proclaimed the arrival of Peter Greenaway with a blast on the Baroque Trumpet. Few directors can have contrived so piercing an announcement of their talent...his masterpiece."

—*The Independent* (UK)

Peter Greenaway on THE DRAUGHTSMAN'S CONTRACT

I had for a long time resisted the idea of the classic European art movie, which, as I saw it then, was too much related to the business of writing literary scripts, processing narrative in predictable formulaic terms, narrowing down the filmic vocabulary, and obeying all the orthodox narrative verities, but I was persuaded, indeed challenged, to create a film world where the characters no longer talked directly into the microphone and the camera, as in the earlier film-essays, but to one other. The result was *The Draughtsman's Contract*. In a way I had not reneged on previous preoccupations. Here was formalism of another kind, using the stiffness and theatricality and artificiality of Restoration drama, using elaborated spoken texts that often, but never completely, threaten to defy comprehension because of their extended conceits and indulgent word-play, and using music that always announces its self-conscious presence as though it was a concert piece existing on its own terms and not merely fulfilling the obligations of illustrative film-musak.

In a way *The Draughtsman's Contract* was *Vertical Features Remake* (1978) with actors. And with its excessive straight-jacketing of the English landscape, it was another catalogue movie, but this time with actors walking the world, but actors deliberately behaving like statues or mannequins, marshalled into a strict regime of times and places.

The time is 1694, the subject is a conspiracy of murder, more Patricia Highsmith than Agatha Christie, the characters are effete provincial aristocrats, the ambience bitter and sweet. Sexual exploitation is paramount. A draughtsman demands sexual favors in return for practicing his art on a country-house; a contract for twelve imaginative couplings with the mistress of the house for twelve prosaic drawings, both to be taken at his predatory pleasure and with an eye to his rigid timing. We believe the draughtsman is in control and we watch his progress of gross sexual exploitation with some respect, for he is an unapologetic immoralist, he is handsome, well turned out, a disadvantaged outsider trying to get inside, and an artist of some talent if not a huge imagination. But the movie takes a reverse turn half way through and the predator becomes the victim, quite how and why, if not already guessed in a plot of women holding onto hereditary in a household of virtual eunuchs, is quickened in the last minutes with the freely commissioned thirteenth drawing and the thirteenth copulation. The artist is not employed after all to draw but to sire. His prowess as a stud is more understood and valued than his prowess as draughtsman.

It is a movie of Catholics and Protestants, interiors and exteriors, manners and snobbisms, insiders and outsiders, and the various manipulative equations of sex and money and power and art, played in an almost color-coded idealized English Wiltshire landscape of white, black and green.

It is of course a fiction, but 1694 was the year of the first Married Woman's Property Act, the formation of the Bank of England and the year of William of Orange's Protestant consolidation of anti-Stuart Catholic Whiggery, a few short years after the Battle of the Boyne. The world in England had changed. Modern history begins. But, entertaining, and hopefully as educative as this might be, it is all really an elaboration of the film's original premise, which is: Should an artist draw what he sees or draw what he knows? Sight and knowledge are not at all the same thing. Seeing and believing. Just because you have eyes does not mean you can see. The eye is lazier than the brain. Because of such contradictions and inadequacies, the draughtsman is framed, and in both meanings of that phrase. And because of the film's ubiquitous optical-device, a frame on an easel, and because of the obsessive framings of the movie-camera itself in making the film, we are framed too. And we know that cinema itself is a framing device in both meanings of the word.

Perhaps with profit the argument that seeing and knowing are not the same thing, should be always applied to cinema. And in the end *The Draughtsman's Contract* perhaps ought to be called *The Filmmaker's Contract*. What is the profit to a filmmaker, if he only films what he sees and not what he, and also his audience, undoubtedly know?

THE DRAUGHTSMAN'S CONTRACT



CAST

Mr. Neville	Anthony Higgins
Mrs. Herbert	Janet Suzman
Sarah Talmann	Anne Louise Lambert
Thomas Noyes	Neil Cunningham
Louis Talmann	Hugh Fraser
Mr. Herbert	Dave Hill
Mr. Seymour	David Gant
One of The Poulencs	David Meyer
One of The Poulencs	Tony Meyer
Mr. Parkes	Nicholas Amer

Written and Directed by	Peter Greenaway
Producer	David Payne
Cinematography	Curtis Clark
Art Director	Bob Ringwood
Editor	John Wilson
Costumes	Sue Blane
Music	Michael Nyman
Production Company	BFI Production Board in association with Channel 4

1982 • UK • 108 minutes • Color • In English • New 35mm print • 1.66:1

A ZEITGEIST FILMS RE-RELEASE
247 Centre St • 2nd Fl • New York • NY 10013
(212) 274-1989 • FAX (212) 274-1644
www.zeitgeistfilms.com

A ZED & TWO NOUGHTS

In Greenaway's much-lauded follow-up to *The Draughtsman's Contract*, a car collides with a swan outside Rotterdam Zoo. Two women passengers die and the driver, Alma Bewick, has to have her leg amputated. Obsessed with the accident, the husbands of the dead women—Siamese twins Oswald and Oliver—embark on an affair with Alma and soon begin experimenting with the time-lapse aesthetics of decay. Full of surprises and magnificent conundrums, Greenaway's third feature is as perversely comic and teasing as it is shocking, made even more decadent with lush cinematography by the great Sacha Vierny and a throbbing score by Michael Nyman.



"Like nothing you've ever seen before."

—*Boston Herald*

"Exquisitely directed and photographed.... Well worthwhile for those willing to be challenged."

—Leonard Maltin, *Cinemanía*

"The boldest and arguably the best of Peter Greenaway's fiction features, this extremely odd and perverse conceptual piece certainly isn't for every taste, although Sacha Vierny's cinematography makes it so luscious that you may find yourself mesmerized in spite of yourself. Only partially a narrative film, this elegant puzzle also involves amputees, painting, a ménage-à-trois, and decomposing animals—along with many other things—which are intricately interrelated thanks to Greenaway's icy brilliance. Definitely a one-of-a-kind movie."

—Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Chicago Reader*

"Immensely entertaining.... Wickedly funny.... How could you fail to love a film that features a prostitute who tells erotic stories about frogs?"

—*NME (UK)*

"As usual with Greenaway, the ideas are large, endless and perverse; and they are teased out with the exquisite formal perfection of a court minuet. Moreover he frames, colors and shoots with a top dollar precision. A film with all the cool, intellectual thrill of the Kasparov-Karpov game."

—*Time Out London*

Peter Greenaway on A ZED & TWO NOUGHTS

The Draughtsman's Contract was critically successful. Some distributors in France even made a lot of money out of its Francophile cartesian hauteur, its icy cool manners and the puzzling intellectual challenges.

To follow a successful and so-called first feature film (so-called because the film had been prepared in a sense on the back of over ten years of experimental filmmaking) was not so easy. And when it finally arrived, after some anguish at ever finding the money to make it, the film, *A Zed & Two Noughts* was itself not so easy either. Some said it was three films in one. First, an essay on twinship and the idea of meeting oneself, second, a dissertation on the world as an ark and, thirdly, a celebration of Vermeer, master of light.

It was photographed by the French master Sacha Vierny, with music again by Michael Nyman, with a cast of live animals in cages courtesy of Rotterdam Zoo, and a cast of dead animals filmed quietly rotting in lengthy time-lapse studies in a field somewhere in Dorset. Much research into the lives of gynecologists and twinship-genetics was avidly pursued. Revered naturalist David Attenborough, blue comedian Jim Davidson, and majestic actor Joss Ackland (who subsequently declared it was the worst film he had ever seen, let alone acted in) gave their authority to its making; and David Cronenberg remade a version of it a little later as *Dead Ringers*, after sitting me down for a long quizzing session in a Toronto hamburger bar. He successfully played the trick of making the two twins one person courtesy of Jeremy Irons, whilst we tried the much more difficult game of making two actors (admittedly brothers) not only twins, but separated Siamese twins, and not only separated Siamese twins, but separated Siamese twins who wanted to be united.

The surgeon responsible for the attempted unification was van Megeren, infamous faker of Vermeers, whose light we borrowed, a light that nearly always comes from the left, a meter and a half above the ground. Vermeer used a primitive camera in the 1670s, and Godard suggested Vermeer might have been the first cinematographer because he created a world based on split seconds of time modelled entirely with light—a definition of cinema.

To celebrate Vermeer, a directory of a painter's vocabulary of light was essential, and in making one, it seemed correct also to make a comparable directory of light to celebrate Sacha Vierny. We made a list. We hoped to make an example of every one of its items—lighting by God at dawn, sunrise, noon, dusk, twilight, moonlight and starlight, fire and phosphorescence, and by man, fireworks, flambeaux, matches, candles, oil-lamps, cathode-tube, neon-tube, car headlights, numerous flashlights and many many more. The final challenge was light by rainbow. And there is such a shot, a rainbow indeed illuminates the doorway of an elephant house.

Vermeer continues to fascinate, not only as a master lightsmith, but also Vermeer as husband, father of eleven children, a Protestant who married a Catholic in religion-divided Netherlands, domestic paragon and mysterious admirer of women, giving them a dignity and an honor rare among his contemporaries, has continued to fascinate. You never see the legs of a Vermeer woman, and so it was with us, except our heroine never had any legs, because they were amputated to make her better fit the film-frame.

A Zed & Two Noughts, striving hard, even in its title, to play games of symbolism, multiple meaning and non-narrative structure, was not recorded in orthodox circles as a comprehensible box-office success, though it now, after 20 years, has a considerable fan-club stretching from Siberia to Mexico City, most of whose members know the film considerably better than I. Because of both its huge ambition and its infelicities, it is the one film I would dearly, if ever given the chance, wish to remake; a parent often reserves his greatest affection for the most troubled and troubling offspring.

A ZED & TWO NOUGHTS



CAST

Alba Bewick	Andrea Ferréol
Oswald Deuce	Brian Deacon
Oliver Deuce	Eric Deacon
Venus de Milo	Frances Barber
Van Hoyten	Joss Ackland
Joshua Plate	Jim Davidson
Beta Bewick	Agnès Brulet
Caterina Bolnes	Guusje van Tilborgh
Van Meegeren	Gerard Thoolen
Stephen Pipe	Ken Campbell
Fallast	Geoffrey Palmer
Narrator of wildlife footage	David Attenborough

Written and Directed by	Peter Greenaway
Producers	Peter Sainsbury, Kees Kasander
Cinematography	Sacha Vierny
Production Design	Ben van Os, Jan Roelfs
Editor	John Wilson
Music	Michael Nyman
Production Companies	BFI Production / Artificial Eye Productions Film Four International (London) / Allarts Enterprises (The Hague)

Shot on location in Holland and the city of Rotterdam

1985 • UK • 115 minutes • Color • In English • 35mm • 1.66:1

A ZEITGEIST FILMS RE-RELEASE
247 Centre St • 2nd Fl • New York • NY 10013
(212) 274-1989 • FAX (212) 274-1644
www.zeitgeistfilms.com