

## **Call for volunteers for the EYE Filmmuseum Nitrate Control Overveen 2018 Special Edition with barcoding**



**Monday April 16<sup>th</sup> to Thursday April 26<sup>th</sup>**

**EYE needs 67 volunteers (8 per day on 8 days, 3 the last day).**

EYE Filmmuseum is the proud keeper of one of the world's finest collection of nitrate films, among which we count the Desmet Collection, registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Nitrate film was the material of choice for the first 55 years of cinema's history, but has been discontinued around 1950 because of its flammability.

EYE has 30 000 reels kept in 3 different vaults in the dunes of Noord-Holland. Our policy is to control all the nitrate cans on a regular basis. This year it's the turn of our Overveen bunker, a vault which has been built by the Filmmuseum in the early 70's especially for the purpose of keeping nitrate, and has a capacity of about 11 000 cans.

And this year, after our customary control, we will barcode the contents of the vault. This is necessary to optimize storage and enable us to absorb the growth of our collection in the coming years. The production of nitrate films may have stopped in 1950, there is still plenty of nitrate around and EYE is getting offers on a regular basis.

From Monday April 16<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday April 25<sup>th</sup> we will work at the vault in Overveen, with a team of 13 people per day. 4 of them will be specialists of nitrate films and vault management, the other 8 will be volunteers with no special knowledge required, but with dedication and enthusiasm. The volunteers will retrieve the cans from the shelves, open them, look for eventual signs of material decay, and return the cans to the shelves. If any signs of decay are noted, the cans will be inspected by the specialists. Tuesday and Wednesday of the second week will be dedicated to barcoding: sticking the cans and the shelves, scanning the cans on the shelves. And on the last day, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>, we will move with a reduced team to the vault in Heemskerk, where we need to sticker the shelves and scan the cans on the shelves.

Nitrate film tends to decompose over time, and produces gasses which react with the cans, producing either a rusty dust (metal cans) or a crystal deposit (plastic cans). The volunteers will be equipped with lab coats, gloves and dust masks for protection. Please note that research has shown that the gasses produced by decomposing nitrate, while emitting a strong smell, contain harmful particles only in very low concentrations. These particles would come above the permitted daily values only if you would stay with your nose directly over extremely decomposed material for a long time, which no-one will be allowed to do! The vaults are cold (around 5°C) for better conservation conditions. A fireman will be present at all times to keep us safe.

The work will require climbing up and down a small ladder to reach the upper shelves and bending down to reach the lower shelves, the ability to carry from 3 to 15 kilos, and good legs to walk back and forth from the shelves to the control table. This work is not suitable for pregnant or breast-feeding ladies (sorry!). People with allergies related to dust, mold or chemicals should also stay away.

The conditions at the vault are rather "rustic". We will have access to a covered space with tables, chairs and a toilet. We will have bottles of mineral water for drinking, but there is no public transport, telephone, coffee machine or bakery in the near surroundings. We will organize a rental bike (payed by EYE) from Haarlem train station (5 km) but car drivers willing to transport other people may be appreciated. Transport costs will be refunded by EYE.

If you are an employee of EYE, please check with your coordinator for permission to participate. External people are very welcome to join. You can join for one or several days, but not part-time.

**Please announce your availability to Catherine Cormon, Head of Collection Management**

**[catherinecormon@eyefilm.nl](mailto:catherinecormon@eyefilm.nl) before Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> of March. The schedule will be finalized in the week of April 2<sup>nd</sup>, and you will receive your answer then.** Most of the times it is possible to schedule people on the day they wish, so please keep the date free. Please indicate in your mail if you are a student of the UvA P&P or the Reinwardt Academy (you'll get a priority in case of overbooking).

- Dates: Monday April 16<sup>th</sup> to Thursday April 26<sup>th</sup>
- Complete days only, one or several
- Schedule: from 8:25 to 17:15 at Haarlem train station (Amsterdam CS 08:04 – ca. 17:40) or 09:00 to 16:30 at the vault
- Place: Overveen, vault on Landgoed Koningshof
- Requirements:
  - o ability to cycle 2 x 5 km or usage of other means of transport
  - o ability to climb up and down a short ladder
  - o ability to carry from 3 to 15 kilos
  - o ability to work in a cold environment - around 5°C (with regular breaks)
  - o ability to work in a systematic and precise way
  - o not suitable for pregnant or breast-feeding ladies
  - o not suitable for people with allergies to dust, mold or chemicals

