

# MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

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## **Museum of the Moving Image and the American Folk Art Museum present film series focusing on the legacy of Francesc Tosquelles**

**June 21–23, 2024**

New York, New York, May 21, 2024 — Museum of the Moving Image (MoMI) and the American Folk Art Museum (AFAM) will co-present the three-day film series [Radical Institutions and Experimental Psychiatry: The Legacy of Francesc Tosquelles on Film](#), co-organized in conjunction with AFAM’s exhibition *Francesc Tosquelles: Avant-Garde Psychiatry and the Birth of Art Brut*.

Inspired by themes in the exhibition, the series will explore mental illness and therapeutic care practices rooted in community building, self-managed care, and creativity that echo Catalan psychiatrist Francesc Tosquelles’s leadership at the Saint-Alban psychiatric hospital in Southern France in the mid-twentieth century.

During that time, Tosquelles developed a practice that came to be called “institutional psychotherapy,” based on non-hierarchical and collective interactions between patients, medical staff, on-site workers, and neighboring rural communities. Under this organizational structure, patients—including now-celebrated artists such as Auguste Forestier and Marguerite Sirvin—had access to a theater, a library, a cinema club, and a printing press, and produced a prodigious artistic output that impacted Jean Dubuffet’s conceptualization of “Art Brut.”

Screenings will take place at MoMI from Friday, June 21, to Sunday, June 23, 2024. This series is co-organized by Mathilde Walker-Billaud, AFAM Curator of Programs and Engagement, and Sonia Shechet Epstein, MoMI Curator of Science & Technology.

Through a selection of international documentaries, shorts, and feature films spanning from 1962 to 2024, this program will highlight the lives of radical psychiatrists trained by, influenced by, or working along the lines of Tosquelles, while offering new insights into the history of psychiatric care and its intersections with politics and culture. Most screenings will be followed by a Q&A session with the filmmakers.

The series will conclude on Sunday, June 23 with the New York premiere of *The Potential History of Francesc Tosquelles, Catalonia and Fear* (2021), investigating Tosquelles’s forgotten legacy in Spain, followed by a conversation with filmmaker Mireia

Sallarès; one of the co-curators of the AFAM exhibition, Joana Masó; and sociologist Eric Fassin.

“We are thrilled to collaborate with MoMI on this important program which highlights and expands on the extraordinary media materials included in the exhibition. This is an opportunity to reflect on the ways in which experimental cinema has contributed to a renewed and nuanced representation of mental illness and what psychiatric care can be,” says Walker-Billaud.

“AFAM’s wonderful exhibition highlights how inspiring Tosquelles’s approach to his patients—first and foremost relating to them as people—was to those who surrounded him. We are very pleased to be presenting ‘Radical Institutions,’ which showcases that legacy through film,” says Epstein.

The series begins on Friday, June 21, with ***Félix’s Couch (Le divan de Félix)*** (1985), a short about Félix Guattari directed by François Pain, and the feature ***True Chronicles of the Blida Joinville Psychiatric Hospital in the Last Century, when Dr Frantz Fanon Was Head of the Fifth Ward between 1953 and 1956*** (2024) by Abdenour Zahzah. Both Guattari and Fanon were psychiatrists and political activists trained and influenced by Tosquelles. The screening will be followed by a conversation with the filmmakers.

On Saturday, June 22, the program will explore the possibilities of educating the “maladjusted,” or those who are unable to cope with the demands of a normal social environment, through reinvented structures of care and knowledge, featuring ***En Rachâchant*** (1982), a short fiction film by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub, and the documentary ***This Kid, There (Ce gamin, là)*** (1975) by Renaud Victor made with special education leader Fernand Deligny. This will be followed by a selection of short films that highlight the role of art in counteracting isolation inside and outside of psychiatric hospitals.

[Click here to view and download the full program schedule.](#)

All screenings take place at Museum of the Moving Image, located at 36-01 35 Ave, Astoria, Queens, NY. Tickets and info are available at [movingimage.org/series/radical-institutions](http://movingimage.org/series/radical-institutions).

About the exhibition at the American Folk Art Museum:

Situated at the intersection of art and psychiatry, ***Francesc Tosquelles: Avant-Garde Psychiatry and the Birth of Art Brut*** explores Tosquelles’s legacy for the first time in the United States.

After fleeing the Nationalist government of Franco amidst the Spanish Civil War, Tosquelles arrived in 1940 at the Saint-Alban psychiatric hospital in Southern France,

where he devised a series of revolutionary psychiatric practices. At the heart of this transformation was the “Club Paul-Balvet,” a cooperative group for organizing celebrations, plays, dances, and circus shows.

During the German occupation of France, this “asylum-village” also became a refuge for political dissidents and intellectuals associated with the artistic avant-garde, who were exposed to the prodigious artistic output of its patients. These very artworks prompted French artist Jean Dubuffet to expand upon the notion of “Art Brut” in 1945 and contribute to the development of his collection.

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**Press contacts:**

Tomoko Kawamoto, MoMI, [tkawamoto@movingimage.org](mailto:tkawamoto@movingimage.org)

For AFAM, contact [publicrelations@folkartmuseum.org](mailto:publicrelations@folkartmuseum.org)

**About the American Folk Art Museum:**

Founded in 1961, the American Folk Art Museum engages people of all backgrounds through its collections, exhibitions, publications, and programs as the leading forum shaping the understanding and appreciation of folk and self-taught artists across time and places.

**About Museum of the Moving Image:**

Museum of the Moving Image (MoMI) is the only institution in the United States that deals with the art, technology, enjoyment, and social impact of film, television, and digital media. In its stunning facility in Astoria, New York, the Museum presents exhibitions; screenings; discussion programs featuring actors, directors, and creative leaders; and education programs. It houses the nation’s most comprehensive collection of moving image artifacts and screens over 500 films annually. Its exhibitions—including the core exhibition *Behind the Screen* and *The Jim Henson Exhibition*—are noted for their integration of material objects, interactive experiences, and audiovisual presentations. For more information about the MoMI, visit [movingimage.org](http://movingimage.org).

Museum of the Moving Image is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and has received significant support from the following public agencies: New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; New York City Council; New York City Economic Development Corporation; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature; Institute of Museum and Library Services; National Endowment for the Humanities; National Endowment for the Arts; and Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation).