



stillend


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an apothetae society production






"This is not
a film.
This is not
a documentary.
Instead...
a document
awry."



A man travels to Africa
in search of a magic bean

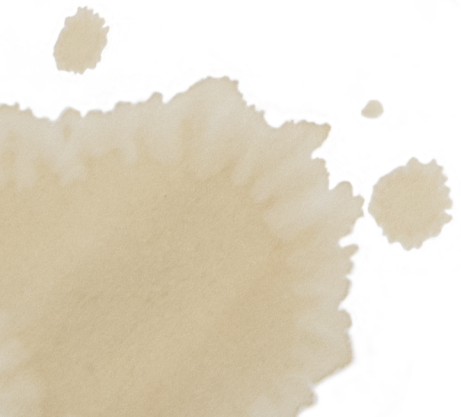


A woman dreams
of what she cannot have

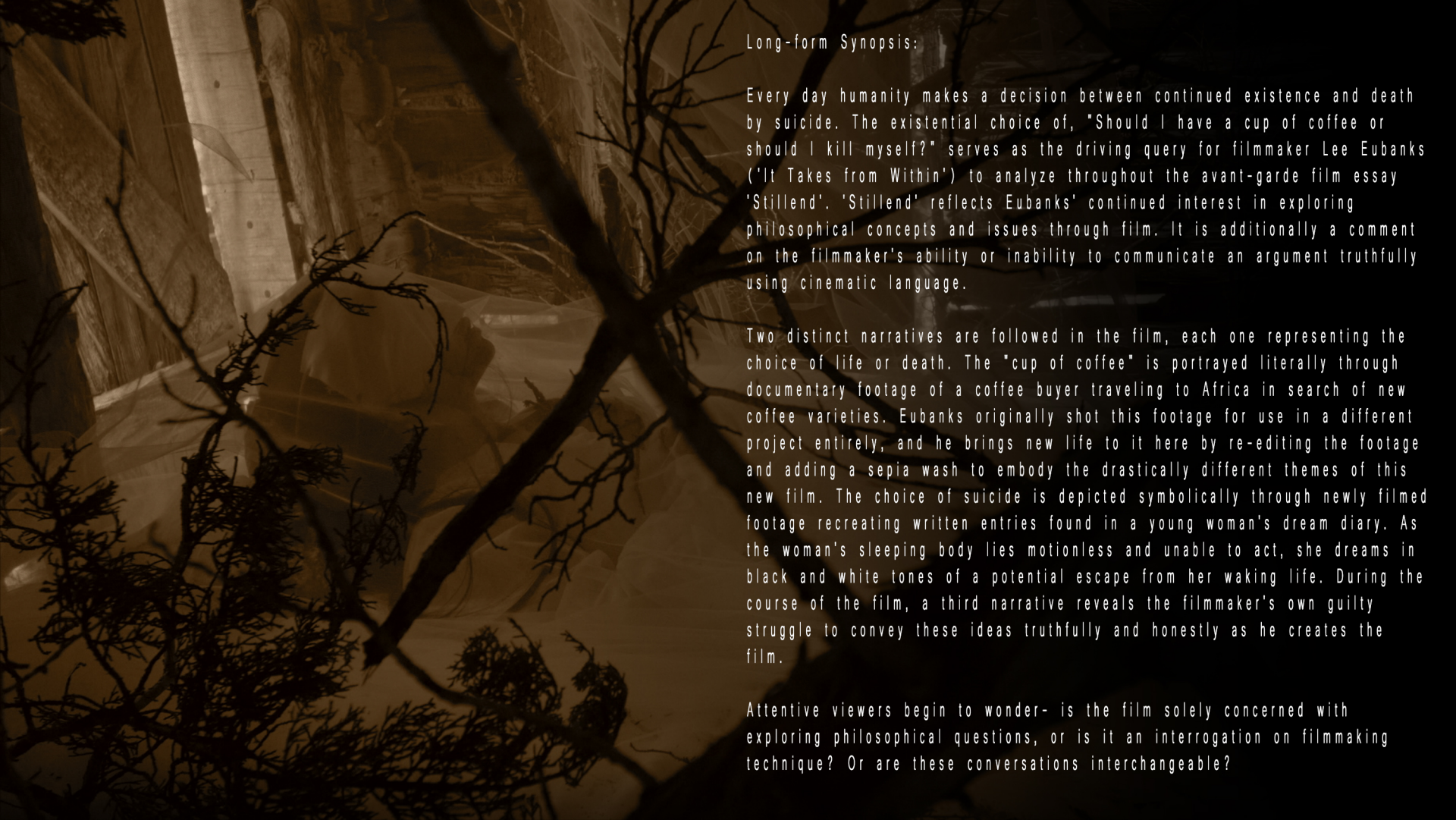


A filmmaker desperately tries
to register his point of view

A cinematic triptych of perpetual examination



2020 | USA | English
80 Min | DCP | Monochrome |
1.78 | Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound

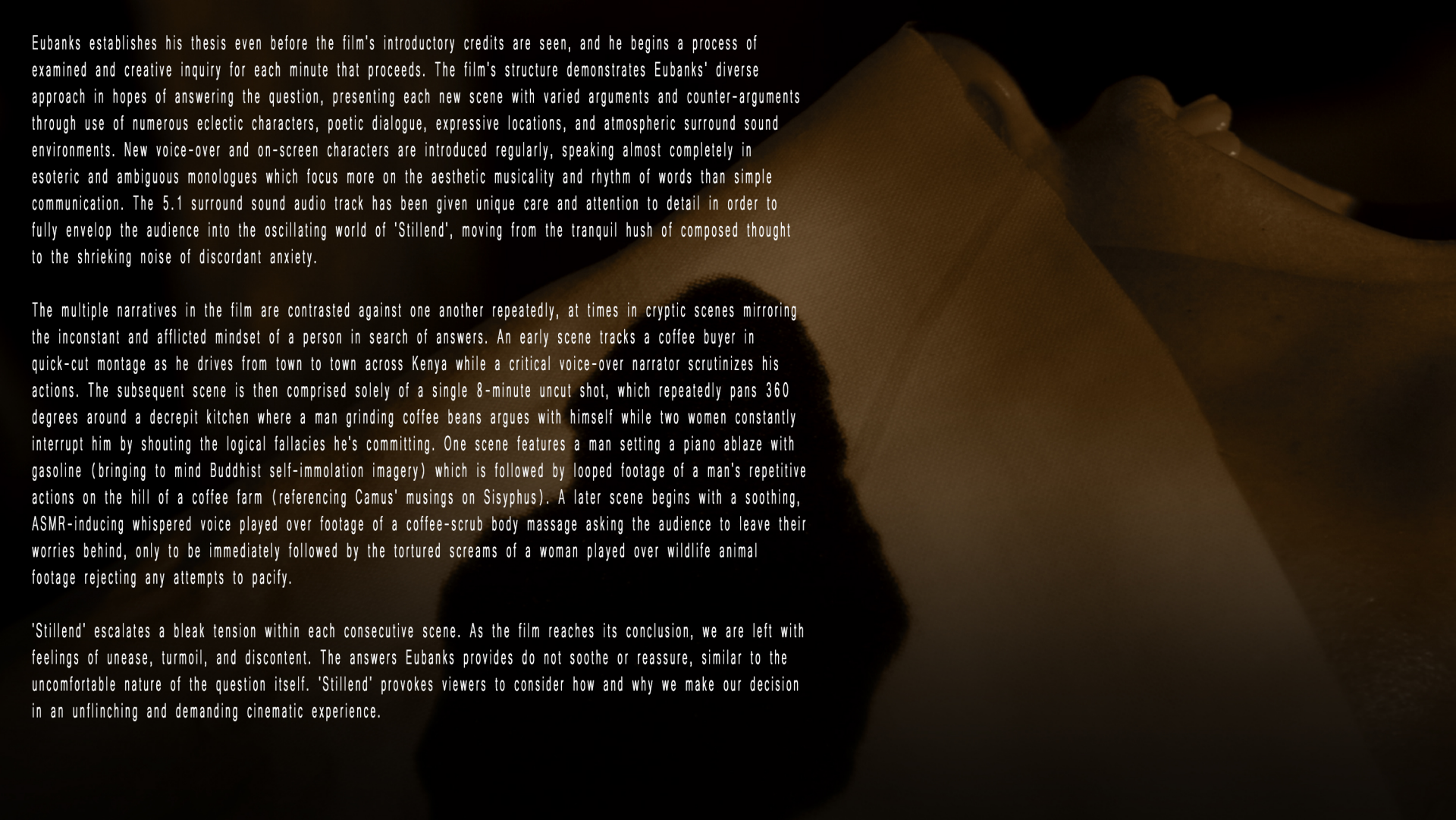
A sepia-toned photograph of a tree with bare branches against a background of crumpled paper. The tree's branches are dark and intricate, filling the left and center of the frame. The background is a light, textured surface of crumpled paper, creating a layered, ethereal effect. The overall mood is contemplative and artistic.

Long-form Synopsis:

Every day humanity makes a decision between continued existence and death by suicide. The existential choice of, "Should I have a cup of coffee or should I kill myself?" serves as the driving query for filmmaker Lee Eubanks ('It Takes from Within') to analyze throughout the avant-garde film essay 'Stillend'. 'Stillend' reflects Eubanks' continued interest in exploring philosophical concepts and issues through film. It is additionally a comment on the filmmaker's ability or inability to communicate an argument truthfully using cinematic language.

Two distinct narratives are followed in the film, each one representing the choice of life or death. The "cup of coffee" is portrayed literally through documentary footage of a coffee buyer traveling to Africa in search of new coffee varieties. Eubanks originally shot this footage for use in a different project entirely, and he brings new life to it here by re-editing the footage and adding a sepia wash to embody the drastically different themes of this new film. The choice of suicide is depicted symbolically through newly filmed footage recreating written entries found in a young woman's dream diary. As the woman's sleeping body lies motionless and unable to act, she dreams in black and white tones of a potential escape from her waking life. During the course of the film, a third narrative reveals the filmmaker's own guilty struggle to convey these ideas truthfully and honestly as he creates the film.

Attentive viewers begin to wonder- is the film solely concerned with exploring philosophical questions, or is it an interrogation on filmmaking technique? Or are these conversations interchangeable?



Eubanks establishes his thesis even before the film's introductory credits are seen, and he begins a process of examined and creative inquiry for each minute that proceeds. The film's structure demonstrates Eubanks' diverse approach in hopes of answering the question, presenting each new scene with varied arguments and counter-arguments through use of numerous eclectic characters, poetic dialogue, expressive locations, and atmospheric surround sound environments. New voice-over and on-screen characters are introduced regularly, speaking almost completely in esoteric and ambiguous monologues which focus more on the aesthetic musicality and rhythm of words than simple communication. The 5.1 surround sound audio track has been given unique care and attention to detail in order to fully envelop the audience into the oscillating world of 'Stillend', moving from the tranquil hush of composed thought to the shrieking noise of discordant anxiety.

The multiple narratives in the film are contrasted against one another repeatedly, at times in cryptic scenes mirroring the inconstant and afflicted mindset of a person in search of answers. An early scene tracks a coffee buyer in quick-cut montage as he drives from town to town across Kenya while a critical voice-over narrator scrutinizes his actions. The subsequent scene is then comprised solely of a single 8-minute uncut shot, which repeatedly pans 360 degrees around a decrepit kitchen where a man grinding coffee beans argues with himself while two women constantly interrupt him by shouting the logical fallacies he's committing. One scene features a man setting a piano ablaze with gasoline (bringing to mind Buddhist self-immolation imagery) which is followed by looped footage of a man's repetitive actions on the hill of a coffee farm (referencing Camus' musings on Sisyphus). A later scene begins with a soothing, ASMR-inducing whispered voice played over footage of a coffee-scrub body massage asking the audience to leave their worries behind, only to be immediately followed by the tortured screams of a woman played over wildlife animal footage rejecting any attempts to pacify.

'Stillend' escalates a bleak tension within each consecutive scene. As the film reaches its conclusion, we are left with feelings of unease, turmoil, and discontent. The answers Eubanks provides do not soothe or reassure, similar to the uncomfortable nature of the question itself. 'Stillend' provokes viewers to consider how and why we make our decision in an unflinching and demanding cinematic experience.



"My thoughts are quiet, clean, disciplined... free from hope."

Filmmaker's Statement:

The Genesis of the project is found in my Original Sin.

After completing my first feature, I was left without immediate inspiration or direction to follow for a second film. In this inert downtime, I accepted work on several projects for which I gained little more than monetary compensation- certainly no personal development or creative fulfillment. It was those sinful movements which left enduring feelings of embarrassment and shame...

...and such strong feelings beckon to be explored cinematically...

I've used cinema in the past as actions of catharsis and therapy, confronting personal fears and anxieties of both psychological and philosophical origin, and I continue these exercises here. I asked myself, "How can I atone for my sins?" Perhaps I could take these very actions and rephrase them by means of redemption? Following in the footsteps of Mr. Robbe-Grillet and countless others, I set out using similar methods. Previously shot footage from these earlier works could be re-edited and better focused towards a more satisfying direction.

A new film of its own appeared to take shape.

I've wanted to make a film exploring certain philosophical arguments for some time now. Camus' famous problem always interested me- I understood the question, but was never satisfied with the answer. And suddenly I began to see, hear, and feel aspects in this new structure which seemed reminiscent of Camus' questions. I could finally start the search for my own answer. What may I find?

Although the author may argue a personal thesis, the viewer will yet experience a journey all their own to reach their individual conclusion. That others might also find these personal cinematic experiments and explorations cathartic brings a sensation of surprise mixed with a perverse sense of comfort from finding companionship in any suffering.

Our participation in the experience of cinema
an afflicting solace
I'm compelled to visit in nearly every waking hour.



A NOTE

ON AUDIO

Surround sound is an opportunity commonly squandered by both audience and filmmaker. Filmmakers often do not utilize the potential of this canvas, to fully explore creating an enveloping aural atmosphere through multiple channels of audio, instead merely dumping music and effects tracks to the rear channels at low volumes and calling it a day. The audience then has been taught to pay more attention to what bigger and brighter screens can offer them instead of their speakers, which results in ignored and inadequate sound setups. With 'Stillend', we have worked hard to design a rich and vibrant surround sound soundtrack that offers just as much detail and nuance as what is seen on the screen.

I therefore humbly ask that our film is experienced on a properly calibrated 5.1 surround sound setup and at a loud volume.

Pieces of dialogue and sound design vital to this film flow between all channels and are at times placed solely in the rear channels- their effective power is lost, perhaps not even perceived at all, when heard through other means. Laptop speakers, headphones, and soundbars destroy any work that is done by the filmmaking team to create a living and breathing world of sound through multiple audio channels and their placement in a viewing room.

In conclusion- if you haven't experienced our film with a surround sound set up, you simply haven't experienced 'Stillend'.



"Every image without save is a fraud
a frame
afraid
of fraught."



Lee Eubanks (b. 1985) is an award-winning writer/director whose films primarily feature abstract, surreal imagery embodying bleak and somber themes of a personal nature. His debut feature film 'It Takes from Within' was released in 2018. Eubanks is a founding member of *The Apothetae Society* filmmaking collective, with 'Stillend' serving as their premiere feature film.

FILMOGRAPHY:

<i>Stillend</i> - feature	2020
<i>Motion Pictures for Wall Frames: Vol. 1</i> 16mm film installation/digital video frame	2019
<i>It Takes from Within</i> - feature	2018
<i>Voice/Glass</i> - short	2013
<i>A Fold Apart</i> - short	2012
<i>OS</i> - short	2010

CRITICAL ACCLAIM:

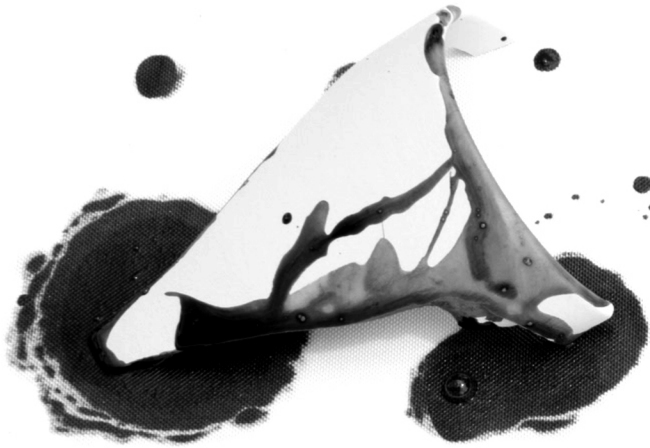
"Anyone who appreciates challenging, avant-garde experimental cinema will find *It Takes from Within* to be constantly intriguing."

-Gary M. Kramer, FILM INTERNATIONAL

"A stark portrait of morbid dread... building toward a silent scream."

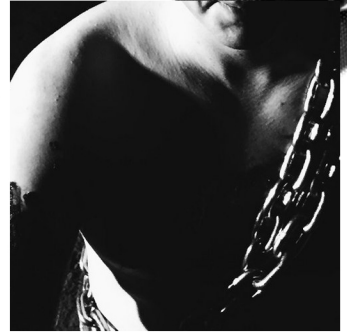
-Anya Novak, ICONS OF FRIGHT

www.Lee-Eubanks.com



D.L.E.I.I. - Composer

Experimental musician D.L.E.I.I. creates sound design and score composition for motion pictures. The artist commonly uses manipulated field recordings throughout his work. Notoriously reclusive, D.L.E.I.I. currently resides in the Faroe Islands.



James Feagin - Actor

Born in San Antonio, Texas, James Feagin became interested in acting at a young age, attending acting classes and school theater groups during middle school. Through the remainder of his schooling to the years after, James placed a personal hiatus on public acting to focus on the shaping and honing of his craft. Recently, James Feagin has emerged to star in a string of independent, experimental, and surrealist films.



Elizabeth James - Actress

Living and working in San Antonio, Texas, Elizabeth James is an artist with a wide variety of experience between acting, still photography, lighting design, and production. In addition to her role as lead actress in Stillend, she has worked with Eubanks previously on several feature and short films.

portraits

soliloquies

cinematography

special effects

original music and sound design

additional philosophical advisory

written

realized

acknowledgments and respect

stillend

an apothetae society production

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nowell zimmerman james feagin elizabeth james
rachael trinidad aaron blanco

john drew anna leszczynska christian miles

jason crow

crow's nest studios

d.l.e.i.i


reed deangelis

the apothetae society

lee eubanks

albert camus macbeth t.s. eliot jlg
hermann hesse emil cioran rene magritte
barry schwartz old family and friends





"I file the document and it disgusts me."