Jayce Salloum has forged a distinctive practice that attempts to grant pictures a political underpinning, to peoples made invisible through military means and political marginalization. Whether it is the Pilehrajat refugees in Lebanon or First Nations people in the Okanagan, he holds up not only their frames but the frames of those who have gone before. These frames can appear as maps, sluglines, home movies, or even the letters of a face. His work invites us to shuttle between these different picture modes so that we might produce our own engaged readings.

This program of international documentaries was selected to bridge and complement the exhibitions of Jayce Salloum at the Kendaell and Mendel Art Galleries. Each of these movies has obvious and necessary connections with Salloum’s pictures, but each takes a singular approach. The stories begin with the work of master Chilean filmmaker Patricio Guzman, a Cannes award-winning giant who has made legendary films since the 1960s. While his work usually appears to be a lyrical exposition of Chilean architecture, it slowly a shift where territories are marked, where things are seen, where they are given names and meaning. In this sense, the metaphoric task of cinema can be seen as subverting a previous metaphorical order, namely the official mapping of space and time. An order that defines places, that defines what has to be seen and done in those places, the way they are inhabited, their capacities and incapacities — “We have to rethink our community beyond the official scenarios about the third world, emerging countries, neo-colonialism, neoliberalization, modernization, etc.”

Six years in the making, Lessons of the Blood, by James T. Hong and Yin-Ju Chen (they are husband and wife), offers a mix of styles, from direct reporting to media collage, in order to-uncover the largely suppressed story of Japanese biological warfare in China. In its multi-headed approach, it is distinctly reminiscent of Salloum’s work, which always seeks multiple points of entry and address, in order to establish a field of association. It is this field that viewers are invited to traverse, each in their own way, whether in Salloum’s still photo collages or in an audiovisual rite like Introduction to the End of an Argument: Lessons opens with a speech that might have headed up End of an Argument: “History is complicated. Nations are complicated. The political is complicated. Suffering, its locality, the bodies of suffering, bring an undeniable power and gravity to Hong/Chen’s movie. In the same way that the first-person testimony of the victims didn’t even know what had happened to them. They didn’t know why they’d been subjected to such wounds for so many years.”

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NOSTALGIA FOR THE LIGHT

by Chris Marker

SYNOPSIS OF THE FILM

The narrative begins in Paris, 1983. The filmmaker, Loti, is whooping and living off of the remains of a French restaurant. His voice is recorded on a tape and played back to him. He is looking for a place to stay and decides to take a look at a house in the outskirts of the city. The house is a small stone house with a garden and a view of the city. Loti is taken by the tranquility of the place and decides to spend the night there. The filmmaker then tells us about his experiences in this place and how he came to live there. He describes the people he met and the memories he had while there. Loti concludes by saying that this place was a refuge for him and that he was able to find peace and solitude there.

LESSONS OF THE BLOOD

by Justin Criterion

SYNOPSIS OF THE FILM

The film begins with a scene of a small town in Asia where a group of young men are assembling. They are preparing for a fight, and the tension in the air is palpable. The filmmaker, who is also a native of this town, is watching the scene with a mixture of curiosity and unease. He then tells us about his childhood in this town and how he was aware of the violence that was taking place. The filmmaker then shows us a series of images of the town and its people, highlighting the different classes and social strata. He also shows us scenes of the town's history, including its colonial past and the effects of the war.

The film then moves on to show us the lives of the young men, who are now adults and have been involved in various forms of conflict. The filmmaker shows us their struggles, their aspirations, and their dreams. He also shows us their families and friends, who are also affected by the violence. The film ends with a scene of a group of elderly men sitting in a circle, reflecting on their lives and the impact of the war on their community.

The filmmaker's message is to show the complexity of the conflict and the human cost of violence. He wants to highlight the courage and resilience of the people who have lived through these difficult times and to remind us of the importance of peace and reconciliation.