

Street of Crocodiles, Brothers Quay, 1986, 21 minutes

Waxworks, Paul Leni, 1924, 82 minutes

Dark Shadows, Tim Burton, 2012, 113 minutes

Thanks Christina Stojanova for curating this package.

Left it up to me to select an animated subject to enhance the feature.

Please to bring "Street of Crocodiles" by the Brothers Quay.

Couple words on Brothers Quay

- Stephen and Timothy, twins, born 1947, USA.
- England for art and film school in 1969, based there since.
- Mid 70s traveled to Czechoslovakia and Poland where their work became heavily influenced by Jan Svankmajer and the music of those regions.
- Svankmajer's influence not only their subversive, grotesque style, but also the use of surrealism.
- During these travels they began collecting broken items to use in animation.
- While their work is very surreal, the film tonight also exhibits strong Expressionistic influences.

German Expressionism, as Christina has been discussing in past months, this is a multi-disciplinary artistic and cultural movement that emerged in Germany, most notably between world war I and the rise of the Nazis. She has already talked about how GE uses light and shadow as well as motifs such as uncanny doubles, secrets, fear, reversals, monsters, and dreams.

To me, Expressionism is all of that but more importantly it is about the externalizing of the emotional state of a character or author; using light, form, colour, sound and any other formal element of an artwork to foreground the internal emotional state of the character rather than using these same elements to create realism or to tell the story. Emotional states are paramount, everything else is secondary.

Back to the Quays: their films begin in the shadows.

- Objects they use are uncomfortable to us. Garbage, dust, filth. This is the detritus that we hope to forget. Come to life, the dirt is our secrets, our dirty secrets.
- Dolls, particularly broken ones, evoke the uncanny. They are us but broken, vulnerable versions of ourselves.
- Light is muddy and dead rather than harsh like GE, but equally important and powerful.

Immediately after *Street of Crocodiles*, we will look at *Waxworks* directed by Paul Leni in Germany in 1924. Last German film. Made a few Hollywood films then died in 1929 at the age of 45.

- This film is also about secrets brought to light. It is an ANTHOLOGY film, made up of a few stories strung together.
- The stories are told by a poet, emphasizing the subjectivity of them for the viewer.
- It is not about the truth so much as it is about revealing the heart of the author.
- Not about horror all the time. As we will see, expressionism goes beyond the ghastly or macabre to help illustrate multiple different stories.

Tim Burton's *Dark Shadows* from 2012 is a period piece set in the 1970s based upon the supernatural soap opera of the same name.

- This is an impassioned re-imagining of a TV show which was GE in its own right, relying more on secrets and shadows than on special effects. Stories were drawn out for months, with many secrets never being revealed in the entire run.
- Burton is one of the most successful contemporary filmmakers to use GE style. Most notably in *Batman*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Nightmare Before Christmas*, and *Frankenweenie*.
- Much of his work is a parody of GE. This blatant use of stylistic shots reminds us that we are watching a movie, that the whole thing is a façade, and to enjoy it on the level of a magic show or an illusion.