

## Samsara

UK 2011

**Directed by**  
 Ron Fricke

**Writing credits**  
 Ron Fricke  
 Mark Magidson

**Cinematography**  
 Ron Fricke

**Music**  
 Marcello De Francisci  
 Lisa Gerrard  
 Michael Stearns

102 mins

Welcome to the 2014 season at our exciting new venue, Winchester Science Centre. We are delighted with our new partnership and look forward to sharing 10 gems with you over the coming weeks.

In the 1970s, *Samsara* would have been known as a head trip. The critic Matt Zoller Seitz calls it "a trance movie." For Fricke and his producer and collaborator Mark Magidson, it is a continuation of the meditative imagery they used in *Baraka* (1992), which intensely regarded the strangeness and wonder of our planet. I met Fricke and Magidson when *Baraka* was shown at Ebertfest, and had the impression that traveling the world and recording these images was sort of their calling. Some of these places, structures, peoples and practices will not endure forever, and if this planet someday becomes barren and lifeless, these films could show visitors what was here. *Samsara* may also suggest some of the ways in which it was lost. Although the documentary presents speeded-up images of city traffic and unseemly mechanical haste, for me the most unforgettable sequence is not one of breathtaking vistas or natural beauty, but of chickens in a food-processing plant. I fear I haven't communicated what an uplifting experience the film is. It is a rather noble film.

Roger Ebert, *Chicago Sun-Times*

There is a telling question posed by an interviewer reported in the background briefing notes to *Samsara*; "was there a political intent behind any of the footage?" Producer Mark Magidson says "It's not political themes you are going after. It's not a value judgement ... it's about how it is now." The question is telling because it is an example of how we bring our own agendas and project them onto the filmmaker's screen. But if we are to get the most out of *Samsara*, we need to see it with a blank agenda; it is a privileged world tour in the company of a man with patience and vision - and a desire to share this amazing world. *Samsara*, Ron Fricke's sequel to *Baraka* (1992) generates similar sensations to that landmark film, flooded with patterns and formations both man-made and natural. Beauty and brutality in nature and in humanity are juxtaposed with visual artistry that is a result of both the images themselves and how they are edited together. As we watch, us film reviewers search earnestly for meaning and agenda, whereas Fricke is intent on discovery and observation, using time lapse photography to impel our visual emotions. And close ups; we never tire of the human face - any human face - but Fricke shows that a close up of just about anything, in the right context, is fascinating and thought provoking.

Andrew L. Urban, *Urban Cinefile*

*Our next screening...*

### The Unbelievable Truth

Tue 21 Jan 2014 8:00pm

Dir: Hal Hartley

Rare chance to see the hugely influential 1989 debut from the Long Island auteur.

