|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **About you** | **[Salutation]** | Sofie | [Middle name] | Verdoodt |
| [Enter your biography] | | | |
| Gent University | | | |

|  |
| --- |
| **Your article** |
| Anger, Kenneth (1927--) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Kenneth Wilbur Anglemyer, known as Kenneth Anger, was brought up in Santa Monica in Southern California. He is one of the most influential directors of the American post-war avant-garde. Anger claims to have found his way to the cinema as a child actor in Max Reinhardt’s film of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1935). After living in France in the early 1950s, he returned to America and became a key figure in San Francisco’s bohemian art community. Both fascinated and repelled by Hollywood, he would become a thorn in the side of the film industry. His book *Hollywood Babylon* was at once criticised and celebrated for dealing with the scandalous and morbid micro-histories of film celebrities and failing stars. A cult icon for occultists and queer subculture followers, he is also recognised as one of the most influential experimental filmmakers alive. His oeuvre consists of short films often described as ‘mythopoetic’ due to the mixture of lyrical imagery, ritualistic montage, mythical subjects and psychodramatic narratives. |
| Kenneth Wilbur Anglemyer, known as Kenneth Anger, was brought up in Santa Monica in Southern California. He is one of the most influential directors of the American post-war avant-garde. Anger claims to have found his way to the cinema as a child actor in Max Reinhardt’s film of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1935). After living in France in the early 1950s, he returned to America and became a key figure in San Francisco’s bohemian art community. Both fascinated and repelled by Hollywood, he would become a thorn in the side of the film industry. His book *Hollywood Babylon* was at once criticised and celebrated for dealing with the scandalous and morbid micro-histories of film celebrities and failing stars. A cult icon for occultists and queer subculture followers, he is also recognised as one of the most influential experimental filmmakers alive. His oeuvre consists of short films often described as ‘mythopoetic’ due to the mixture of lyrical imagery, ritualistic montage, mythical subjects and psychodramatic narratives. In the trance-like, homoerotic *Fireworks* (1947), he adds a campy twist to the dreamlike film poetics of the 1940s avant-garde.  For Anger, film practice should be the audiovisual equivalent of a spiritual ceremony. An adept of the occultist Aleister Crowley, who preached individual power and the release of creative impulses through magic and sexual rites, his work contains elements of paganism, the Dionysian, and the archetypical. His ‘Magick Lantern Cycle’, consisting of nine films made between 1947 and 1980, testifies to his obscure affiliations. Ritual is not the frequent subject of his films, but it does characterise the experience of film viewing: Besides the motives of incantation and transformation, Anger also considers sociological themes, presenting ambivalent sexuality as a counter-force against oppressive forms of representation. He dismantles and subverts mainstream stereotypes by an amalgam of postmodern, cross-referential strategies, which include frequent resort to pop music, saturated colours, highly stylised framing and camera movements, and the de-familiarisation of mass cultural icons such as Mickey Mouse. Humour and violence often go hand in hand in films such as *Scorpio Rising* (1963), probably his best-known work, which synchronises a playful mosaic of pop songs to a disturbingly fetishistic ode to the motorcyclist aesthetic and lifestyle. The production of the occult-psychedelic *Lucifer Rising* (1970-1980), the last part of the Magick Lantern Cycle, was troubled by conflicts with musician Bobby Beausoleil (eventually imprisoned for his involvement in the Manson Family murders). After this chaotic creation, Anger released some minor works and kept silent for almost twenty years. In 2000 he made a comeback with several exhibitions and new short films in which he occasionally performs, adding a new level of self-reflection to his mythographic career. A recent accomplishment is his *Technicolor Skull* performance (2011) for images and sound, with Anger playing the theremin, and released as a recording on red vinyl. |
| Further reading:  (Brook)  (Hunter)  (Hutchison)  (Sitney) |