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NAAC ACCREDITED 'A' GRADE



Topic: Bert Haanstra _Zoo.

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Bert Haanstra

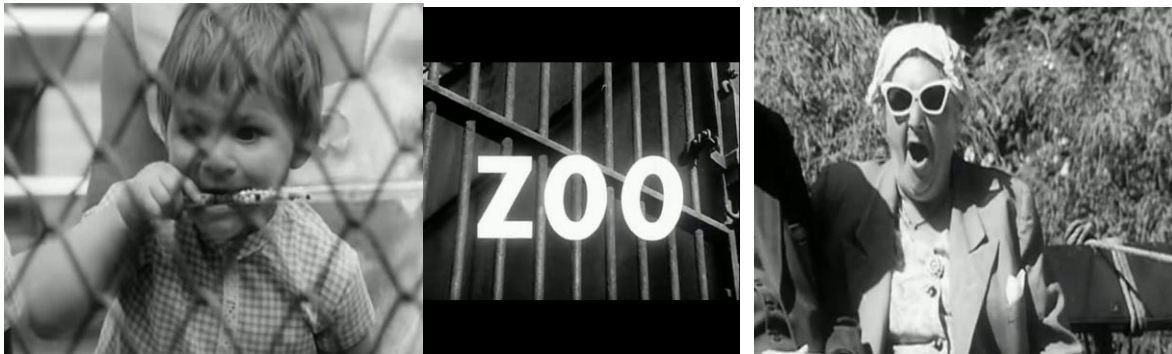
Bert Haanstra was born in 1916 the town of Holten and became a professional filmmaker in 1947. He won international



acclaim with his short documentary *Spiegel van Holland/ Mirror of Holland* for which he received the Grand Prix du court métrage at the Cannes-festival of 1951. During the fifties he made six films for Shell,

among others *The Rival World* (1955) on insects spreading deadly diseases and how to fight them. In 1958 his documentary *Glass*, a filmic improvisation made in a glassfactory, won an Academy Award for Best Documentary Short Subject. He directed several fiction films. *Fanfare*, a comedy situated in a small Dutch village, is still the Netherlands' second most popular film ever (measured at the box office), only surpassed by Paul Verhoevens *Turkish Delight*. Abroad however, *Fanfare* was hardly noticed. In several shorts and in long documentaries like *Alleman/ The Human Dutch* and *Stem van het water/ The Voice of the Water* Haansta reflected on The Netherlands and its inhabitants

All these films made him one of the most popular filmmakers in the history of Dutch cinema. The documentary *Alleman* was seen in the cinema by 20 percent of the total Dutch population. In the seventies and eighties Haanstra addressed a new subject. He made several films about animals. In the long documentary *Bij de beesten af/ Ape and Super-Ape* (1973), for which he collaborated with Frans de Waal and Jane Goodall, among others, he compared the behavior of animals and human beings. In total Haanstra received close to a hundred awards. He died in 1997 in the town of Hilversum.



Zoo (1961), filmed at Artis Royal Zoo in Amsterdam by Dutch documentary film maker Bert Haanstra.

A perfect, fast and hilarious montage. Using images from Artis (Amsterdam Zoo), Bert Haanstra shows that a couple of similarities can be discovered between human and animal. Particularly the manner in which human and ape are confronted with each other, is significant. The images speak for themselves, human voices or commentary is absent. The ironic music of Pim Jacobs does add an extra dimension to the whole. With regards to human and animal Haanstra limits himself for the time being to this short film, recorded with a hidden camera. Later on, in several big films, he would return to this subject. Haanstra's first foray into candid-camera documentaries is a beautiful example of not only the joys of a being in a zoo, but also a test of the medium. With the many images Haanstra collected of both the creatures in and out of the cages, he creates a weird, unspoken dialogue between the displayed ones and the beholders in a test of pure editing.

This is a concept that gets attempted in many ways but rarely succeeds (that of turning the tables to view the observers). It's Haanstra's gift for capturing the right emotions and putting them in a meaningful order that elevates this piece.

At it's heart, this is a marvelous achievement in editing and its syncopating jazz score really brings that to the front.