

For decades now, Berlin has been a hub for experimental film. Now the scene's veterans, [Robert Beavers](#) and [Ute Aurand](#), and young 16mm filmmakers meet to restore old negatives in their studio. *By Sanders Isaac Bernstein*

HERMITS, ANARCHISTS AND AESTHETES

THE FACES OF EXPERIMENTAL FILM

In February, when massive crowds flock to the Berlinale's cinemas to sit before the big screen, a handful of filmmakers from Berlin and beyond will spend their days arduously bent over an editing table examining 16mm film negatives. For three weeks, at the Wilmersdorf studio belonging to experimental filmmaking couple Robert Beavers and Ute Aurand, volunteers will inspect the glue of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of film splices. Working on a section of a film composed of 20,000 frames, they will check each frame's bonding no fewer than six times to confirm it can endure printing and projection; if it can't, they'll scrape it off and re-glue. This committed group will be working on a project that's been in process for

nearly two decades: the restoration of *Eniaiois*, the 80-hour-long magnum opus of Gregory Markopoulos, an important figure in the history of experimental film, and Beavers' late partner in art and life.

By the time he died, Markopoulos had recut his work into this behemoth, but the adhesive he used has since decomposed – part of why the restoration process is so tedious. This collective effort exemplifies the devotion to film and personal connections that sustain the experimental film community in Berlin. The Wilmersdorf repair is an intermittent ritual, but the regular screening of the restored film cycles – shown in 10-hour increments on the lush, tree-enclosed tract of land in Greece's Arcadia that Beavers and Markopoulos bought and named Temenos, a Greek word meaning “sacred grove” – have happened every four years since 2004, save for a pandemic-related delay. These screenings have grown into a kind of shared pilgrimage, as



