KINONIK

PERSONA (1966)

Directed by Ingmar Bergman

WEDNESDAY March 18th 7PM

SATURDAY March 21st 2PM / 7PM



A celebrated actress walks onstage, stops speaking mid-performance, and doesn't start again. Not trauma, not aphasia; refusal. Elisabet Vogler has chosen silence. Doctors find nothing physically wrong. She's simply stopped performing the role expected of her. Ingmar Bergman made *Persona* in 1966, twenty-one years after photographs from the concentration camps ended his own decade-long performance: he'd supported Hitler through his teens and twenties, "delighted by his success and saddened by his defeats," until images of the death camps forced what he called "a hideous shock - in a brutal and violent way I was suddenly ripped of my innocence."

Alma, a young nurse, takes Elisabet to an isolated cottage on Fårö. Alma talks compulsively; Elisabet listens in silence. Gradually their identities begin to merge - Bergman fuses their faces in post-production, two women becoming one. Halfway through, the film itself breaks: the celluloid appears to burn in the projector, the image shatters, then slowly reconstitutes, as if the material can't bear what it's showing. Sven Nykvist shoots in harsh black and white, faces filling the frame. Liv Ullmann's refusal to speak and Bibi Andersson's desperate confession are both acts of unbearable exposure.

This is Bergman interrogating his own complicity: what happens when you can no longer perform the role you've been playing; what witnessing does to both the person who sees and the person who stays silent; what it costs to finally acknowledge what you've been ignoring. Twenty-one years after his reckoning, Bergman made a film about the moment when maintaining innocence becomes impossible.