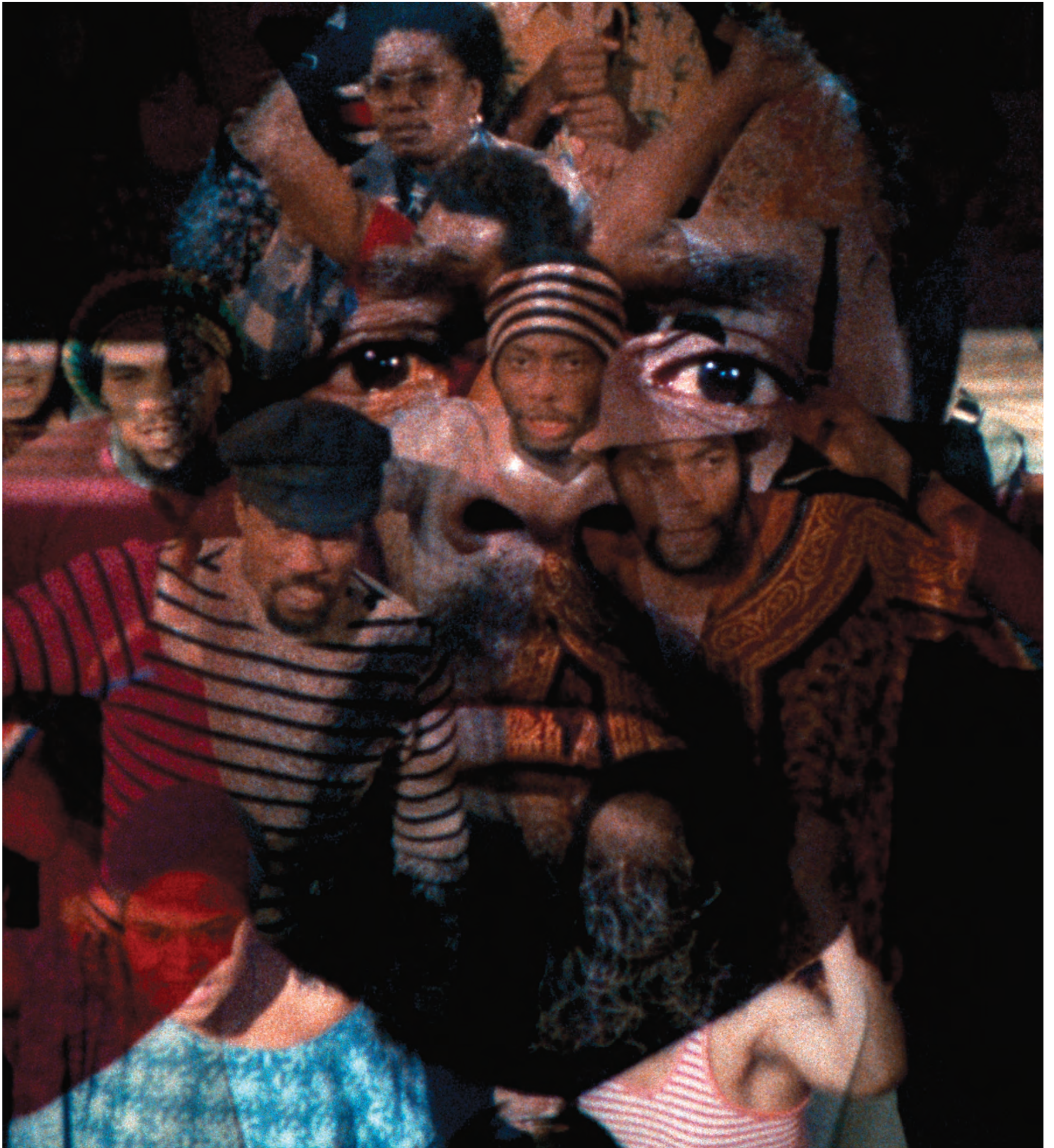


HARVARD FILM ARCHIVE



JANUARY - MAY 2023

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Kenji Mizoguchi *THE LIFE OF OHARU*

A legend of the Japanese cinema, Kinuyo Tanaka (1909 – 1977) brought her luminous presence and incomparable talents as an actress to an extraordinary number of landmark films, including key works by renowned directors such as Heinosuke Gosho, Keisuke Kinoshita, Kenji Mizoguchi, Mikio Naruse and Yasujiro Ozu. Although Tanaka played a wide range of leading roles during her long and storied career, she is best remembered for portraying women who find courage and dignity in the face of severe adversity. It is tempting to read Tanaka's vivid embodiment of noble suffering as an expression of her own difficult life experience after the premature death of her father thrust her family into poverty. It was Tanaka, the youngest of eight brothers and sisters, who took on the role of principal breadwinner by finding early fame as a performer—first on the musical stage, at the tender age of nine, and soon after in her first screen roles, as a child actor in silent films. By the 1930s Tanaka was firmly established as one of Japan's major stars, earning her the lead role in such prominent productions as the country's first fully synchronized talking picture. Tanaka's acclaim rose even further after WWII as the Japanese cinema entered what many have called its Second Golden Age, most notably through her indelible lead performances in three masterworks that crown Mizoguchi's acclaimed series of films about singular women buffeted by inexorable historical forces: *Ugetsu*, *Sansho the Bailiff* and *The Life of Oharu*.

At the very height of her fame, Tanaka launched a remarkable and unprecedented parallel career as a filmmaker, directing six films between the years 1952 – 1963 that expanded and gave explicit feminist perspective to themes central to her work as an actress. Tanaka was only the second woman to direct a feature film in the Japanese studio system (before her came Tazuko Sakane whose sole film, *New Clothing* (1936) is sadly lost), and one of the very few woman narrative filmmakers active anywhere in the world. Supported and encouraged by director mentors with whom she had worked, including Kinoshita and Ozu—who each, in fact, offered her choice scripts to direct—Tanaka also took full advantage of her networks of fellow actors and technicians to collaborate with some of the major talents of the postwar era. Mizoguchi, in contrast, openly sought to keep his biggest star from filmmaking, wielding his position as Chair of the Director's Guild to try to block Tanaka from being allowed to direct.

In her powerful debut feature, *Love Letter*, Tanaka subtly but effectively announced her aim as director to offer complex, realistic and lastingly relevant explorations of the experiences of Japanese women and

All programs curated by Haden Guest unless otherwise noted. All text written by Haden Guest and Brittany Gravely unless otherwise noted.

On the cover: A chorus of voices contest the history and confirm the dark legacy of slavery in Med Hondo's radical, revisionist musical *West Indies*, recently preserved by the HFA, p. 25.

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(1964 - 2017)



Vlada Petric
1928 - 2019

Printer: TCI Press

the sociocultural and historical forces set against them. A moving exploration of trauma and heartache set in the back-alley world of Occupation-era Tokyo, *Love Letter* effectively counterbalances the perspective of a melancholy veteran soldier with that of his guilt-ridden ex-lover whose dark yet all-too common secret Tanaka gently humanizes. Her third film and arguably her masterpiece, *Forever a Woman*, went even further with its moving and taboo-shattering portrait of a sexually liberated poet fighting against breast cancer. In subsequent works Tanaka continued to give prominence and human dimension to the perspective of Japanese women explored in a range of different situations—from the story of former sex workers trying to reform in *Girls of the Night*, to a young princess forced into marriage in WWII-era Mongolia in *The Wandering Princess*, and, in *Lovers Under the Crucifix*, the tale of a young woman trapped by the rigid class hierarchy and religious prejudice of 16th century feudalistic society. Tanaka gave herself a minor role in her only comedy, the lovely *The Moon Has Risen*, and uses her small part to render an insightful homage to the subtle craft and art of screen acting.

Until quite recently Tanaka's singular work as a filmmaker has been under-appreciated and, ironically, overshadowed by her towering status as an actress. Seen together, her very distinct films reveal Tanaka as a major director and unsung pioneer of feminist cinema who paved the way for women filmmakers in Japan and around the world. The Harvard Film Archive is pleased to present all six of Tanaka's features accompanied by a showcase of her work as an actress from the same years she was also directing, giving the rare opportunity to explore, on the big screen, the rich dialogue active across her work before and behind the camera. — HG

Film descriptions by Haden Guest, unless otherwise noted.

Special thanks: Mary C. Brinton and Stacie Matsumoto—Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, Harvard; Daniel Kasman and Kelley Dong—MUBI.



Kinuyo Tanaka LOVE LETTER

friday january 20 at 7pm

sunday january 29 at 3pm

LOVE LETTER KOIBUMI

Revealing the careful balance between unflinching realism and tender lyricism that would define all of her work as a director, Tanaka's first film subtly contrasts the different experiences of Japanese men and women after WWII through its portrait of two damaged souls: an ex-soldier unwilling to fully re-enter society and his former lover whose traumatic experiences have made her a reclusive outcast. With its remarkable frankness, *Love Letter* also showcases Tanaka's interest in giving equal weight to her characters' vulnerability and weakness as their strength, qualities embodied by the film's leads, Yoshiko Kuga and Masayuki Mori, Tanaka's *Ugetsu* costar. Never afraid of unglamorous roles, Tanaka gave herself a poignant cameo as an older woman trying to wring money from her GI ex-boyfriend. A sensitive adaptation of a recently published semi-autobiographical novel by acclaimed author Fumio Niwa, the film's screenplay was a symbolic baton affectionately passed along by Keisuke Kinoshita to his regular actress.

Directed by Kinuyo Tanaka. With Masayuki Mori, Yoshiko Kuga, Jukichi Uno
1953 Japan, DCP, b/w, 98 min. Japanese with English subtitles

saturday january 21 at 7pm

sunday january 22 at 3pm

FLOWING NAGARERU

Released the same year as Mizoguchi's *Street of Shame*, Naruse's film takes a quieter and at first, seemingly more neutral approach to the same subject—the melancholy and exploitative floating world of prostitution in the last years that it was still legal in Japan. Renowned as perhaps the greatest director of “women's pictures” in the Japanese cinema, Naruse uses a declining geisha house as the

stage for an intergenerational portrayal of exploitation and resistance that never allows the women to simply be victims but instead amplifies and explores their complex agency. While Tanaka plays an older and preternaturally competent maid newly arrived on the scene who acts as a detached observer of the multiple intertwined dramas unfolding before her, she remains the most enigmatic of the characters, hinting at a past that is never fully revealed.

Directed by Mikio Naruse. With Kinuyo Tanaka, Isuzu Yamada, Hideko Takamine
Japan 1956, 35mm, b/w, 117 min. Japanese with English subtitles

sunday january 22 at 7pm

THE WANDERING PRINCESS RUTEN NO OHI

Five years after the release of *Forever a Woman*, Tanaka was invited by Daiei to direct a big budget *josei eiga* (or “woman's film”). Her first color and widescreen film, *The Wandering Princess* is a historical epic about the challenge for a woman to be an individual and to be the face of the nation at the same time. Using a screenplay written by Natto Wada (the wife of filmmaker Kon Ichikawa), the film stars Machiko Kyo as Ryuuko, a fictionalized version of the Japanese noblewoman Saga Hiro—the wife of



Mikio Naruse FLOWING

Puzhe, the younger brother of the emperor of Manchukuo. Arranged marriages frequently appear in Tanaka's films as a major obstacle to independence, particularly because they usually involve coercion rather than outright force and therefore tacitly pressure the woman to deny herself. Tanaka leaves ambiguous whether Ryuuko loves Puzhe or whether she merely fears him less than others in the Manchurian court. The extent to which *The Wandering Princess* emphasizes Ryuuko's detachment from history is as moving as it is disconcerting. The film's swelling sentimentality—Tanaka described the project as her take on *War and Peace*—sweeps the audience off its feet, up and away from an interrogation of Japanese imperialism. But paradoxically, the link that Tanaka draws between Ryuuko's limited autonomy as a wife and mother and her lack of political responsibility generates a perceptive portrayal of how a colonial empire manipulates images of womanhood for a nationalist cause without necessarily advancing women's rights. — Kelley Dong

Directed by Kinuyo Tanaka. With Machiko Kyo, Eiji Funakoshi, Atsuko Kindaichi
Japan 1960, DCP, color, 102 min. Japanese and Mandarin with English subtitles

monday january 23 at 7pm

friday january 27 at 9pm

UGETSU UGETSU MONOGATARI

After the triumph of *The Life of Oharu* at Venice, Mizoguchi and Tanaka were once more in the international spotlight after *Ugetsu* won a top prize at the festival with its mesmerizing blending of *jidaigeki* and the fantastical ghost stories rising in popularity during the postwar years. A haunting meditation on human folly punctuated with grim humor, *Ugetsu* unspools parallel stories of two impoverished potters trying to find wealth in the midst of war. Abandoning their wives, they each pursue differently twisted but equally foolhardy paths toward riches and fame. As the wife of Masayuki Mori's greed-blinded husband, Tanaka is the conscience of the film, a moving emblem of devotion and hearthfire solidity, held up in contrast to the bewitching noblewoman, played by Machiko Kyo, who threatens to steal her husband. Tanaka is also the central figure in two devastating and now legendary scenes that count among the high points of Mizoguchi's lyrically expressive cinema: the separation of the family on Lake Biwa and a terrifying rendering of the cruelly indifferent violence of war.

Directed by Kenji Mizoguchi. With Masayuki Mori, Machiko Kyo, Kinuyo Tanaka
Japan 1953, 35mm, b/w, 97 min. Japanese with English subtitles

friday january 27 at 7pm

sunday february 5 at 3pm

FOREVER A WOMAN AKA THE ETERNAL BREASTS

CHIBUSA YO EIEN NARE

Autobiographical elements permeate Tanaka's staggering masterpiece, penned by female screenwriter Sumie Tanaka and depicting the life of *tanka* poet Fumiko Nakajo, who died of late-stage breast cancer in 1954. Like Tanaka's previous films, *Forever a Woman* switches between a life lived and a life talked about. After divorcing her drug-addicted and cheating husband, whom she married after only one matchmaking meeting, Fumiko refuses to remarry. Though this makes her the subject of much scrutiny, she ignores the gossip and dedicates herself to writing poems that others refer to as overblown "female problems." If read as implicit self-portraiture, Fumiko's refusal to die quickly and quietly can be seen as a reference to Tanaka's feelings towards the ageism she herself faced, which equated her forties to the start of old age. — Kelley Dong

Directed by Kinuyo Tanaka. With Yumeji Tsukioka, Ryoji Hayama, Junkichi Orimoto
Japan 1955, DCP, b/w, 110 min. Japanese with English subtitles

sunday january 29 at 7pm

THE MOON HAS RISEN TSUKI WA NOBORINU

Written by Yasujiro Ozu and Ryosuke Saito, *The Moon Has Risen* is a breezy romantic comedy about the awkwardness that emerges at the juncture between tradition and modernity. In a nod to Ozu, Chishu Ryu stars as an easy-going, joke-cracking widower whose youngest daughter decides to play matchmaker for her unwitting older sister. While audiences and critics were keen to point out Ozu's influence, the film evolves beyond homage with Tanaka's lively pace and frontal compositions, which contain large expanses between foreground and background. A number of devices from *Love Letter* reappear in *The Moon Has Risen*, presented with more precision: for instance, the recurring use of gossip as a means of indirect characterization—an unsurprising move given Tanaka's familiarity with being the talk of the town. There are vivid contrasts between men and women (men wait to be served, women rush to serve) as well as older and younger people, who have very different opinions on when and how to confess. The filmmaker again makes a cameo, this time as a servant instructed by her employer to impersonate someone else on the phone. The scene is framed like an audition as the employer sits across from the nervous servant, hands her a sheet of paper, guiding her through the lines and finally complimenting Tanaka by saying, "You're a natural." The joke is reminiscent of Charlie Chaplin's appearance in *A Countess From Hong Kong*, in that it assumes and teases the audience's knowledge of Tanaka's star power. The encounter itself, between a legendary actress and Nikkatsu's up-and-coming It Girl, playfully extends Tanaka's examination of generational differences among women to the realm of cinema. — Kelley Dong

Directed by Kinuyo Tanaka. With Chishu Ryu, Shuji Sano, Hisako Yamane
Japan 1955, DCP, b/w, 102 min. Japanese with English subtitles

monday january 30 at 7pm

SANSHO THE BAILIFF SANSHO DAYU

A highpoint among postwar Japan's *jidaigeki* films, *Sansho the Bailiff* is both one of Mizoguchi's most accessible works and one of his most sublime (in the



Kinuyo Tanaka *FOREVER A WOMAN*

word's original sense as an overwhelming meeting of beauty and terror). The narrative impassively follows two families caught up in sweeping cycles of rise and fall, betrayal and resignation, as Mizoguchi's tracking shots both entrance with their cinematic majesty and shock with the dark surprises they reveal. Tanaka gives one of the most haunting performances of her career as a mother separated from her children by the cruel tides of fate. Tanaka's uncanny ability to embody suffering now sees her transformed into an aged woman shaped by the toll of waiting and hoping for the impossible. Mizoguchi's elegy to human fortitude can also be taken as a stinging critique of the lasting physical and psychological devastation wrought by the militaristic nationalism that led to Japan's actions in World War II.

Directed by Kenji Mizoguchi. With Kinuyo Tanaka, Yoshiaki Hanayagi, Kyoko Kagawa
Japan 1954, 35mm, b/w, 124 min. Japanese with English subtitles

saturday february 4 at 7pm

THE LIFE OF OHARU SAIKAKU ICHIDAI ONNA

Mizoguchi's personal favorite of all his films, *The Life of Oharu* is in many ways a summary work, the crystallization of his vision of a woman martyred by social injustice and the Meiji era as a dark cauldron of the repressive, misogynistic and feudalistic sprits that linger, atavistically, in his contemporary films. Tanaka reveals incredible range in her depiction of a courtesan's vertiginous fall from grace, a trajectory whose gleaming sharp edge revealingly eviscerates the seedy underbelly of Meiji social institutions and mores. The expressive camera movement so celebrated in Mizoguchi's cinema is given a sublime showcase in the film, with almost operatically soaring movements comparable to the films of



Kinuyo Tanaka *THE MOON HAS RISEN*

Ophüls and Murnau. By garnering the International Prize at the Venice Film Festival, *The Life of Oharu* brought Mizoguchi to international attention, and by coming the year after *Rashomon* captured the Golden Lion, helped propel Japanese cinema onto the world stage.

Directed by Kenji Mizoguchi. With Kinuyo Tanaka, Toshiro Mifune
Japan 1952, 35mm, b/w, 136 min. Japanese with English subtitles

sunday february 5 at 7pm

EQUINOX FLOWER HIGANBANA

The seventh and final film that Tanaka made with Ozu counts among the finest of his late period. Ozu's first film made in color, *Equinox Flower* is both a delicate elegy and a delectable comedy—the portrait of a domestic tyrant at odds with his liberated daughter, who shuns the idea of arranged marriage. With subtle comic effect, Tanaka plays the wiser wife of Shin Saburi's stubborn husband, reluctant to let his only daughter choose her own husband. A succession of quietly implosive epiphanies, *Equinox Flower* combines the director's signature visual precision with color coding (with special use of Ozu's favorite, red, playfully punctuated by a recurrent teapot) that underscores key elements of the environment. As the father is slowly won over, he sums up the director's own sense of life's capriciousness: "Everyone is inconsistent now and then, except God. Life is full of inconsistencies. The sum total of all the inconsistencies of life is life itself."

Directed by Yasujiro Ozu. With Shin Saburi, Kinuyo Tanaka, Ineko Arima
Japan 1958, 35mm, color, 118 min. Japanese with English subtitles

sunday february 12 at 7pm

sunday february 19 at 3pm

GIRLS OF THE NIGHT ONNA BAKARI NO YORU

Girls of the Night could be taken as a pointed response, or perhaps sequel, to *Street of Shame*, the final feature by Kenji Mizoguchi, the director with whom Tanaka, as an actress, is most closely associated. While Mizoguchi's film offered a harsh indictment of state-regulated prostitution that was claimed by many to have inspired Japan's 1956 Anti-Prostitution Law, it also extended the sexual aestheticization of female suffering for which the filmmaker is well known and sometimes critiqued. In Tanaka's hands, however, the same subject of exploited women is approached from a radically different angle, looking now at the effects of the new law that closed down the legalized brothels while also creating a nefarious sex-trafficking underworld. Focused on a center for the rehabilitation of sex workers, the film follows the travails of one young

woman who leaves the safe house only to struggle bitterly to shed her past. Adopting the perspective of the young woman, effectively played by Hisako Hara, Tanaka reveals the omnipresent and insidious prejudice against “fallen women,” most notably from other women. Especially impressive is Tanaka’s resistance of any easy narrative resolution, making palpable the harsh reality of women living in a society ruled by unyielding and hypocritical mores.

Directed by Kinuyo Tanaka. With Hisako Hara, Akemi Kita, Kyoko Kagawa
Japan 1961, DCP, b/w, 93 min. Japanese with English subtitles

monday february 20 at 7pm

LOVE UNDER THE CRUCIFIX OGIN-SAMA

Produced by the independent production company Carrot Club and distributed by Shochiku, Tanaka’s final film is a sixteenth century-set *jidaigeki* (period film) about a Christian samurai played by Tatsuya Nakadai and a tea master’s stepdaughter, played by Carrot Club co-founder Ineko Arima, whose lust for him threatens to dethrone his God. Swathed in ornate layers of blues, pinks and greens, the film inverts the usual structure of Tanaka’s films, which feature delayed love confessions usually already marked by resignation. Arima’s tenacious longing makes *Love Under the Crucifix* Tanaka’s most erotic film, with sexual tension sustained by elegant (and never excessive) intimations and symbols, most pointedly a cross necklace. The sight of a woman (Keiko Kishi, another Carrot Club founder) sentenced to

death for rejecting a nobleman’s advances inspires Arima, who sees in her a fellow sinner, to take radical action. As the concluding chapter of Tanaka’s directing career, *Love Under the Crucifix* is the peak of a linear progression and the natural culmination of Tanaka’s vested interest in a woman’s right to refuse—to turn down any man, to say no to an unwanted life. — Kelley Dong

Directed by Kinuyo Tanaka. With Ineko Arima, Tatsuya Nakadai, Ganjiro Nakamura
Japan 1962, DCP, color, 102 min. Japanese with English subtitles

friday february 24 at 7pm

sunday february 26 at 3pm

MOTHER OKAASAN

A perennial favorite of Japanese cinema, *Mother* is also a somewhat uncharacteristic work for Mikio Naruse, one of the few humorous films in an oeuvre better known for dark melodrama. Tanaka stars as a recent widow with three children struggling to manage her husband’s dry-cleaning business. While seemingly told from the point of view of her eldest daughter, *Mother* ultimately centers upon Tanaka in an unabashedly sentimental hymn to maternal self-sacrifice and dedication. Nevertheless, a certain edge becomes evident as Tanaka’s self-deprecation takes on an unsettling, obsessive quality.

Directed by Mikio Naruse. With Kyoko Kagawa, Eiji Okada, Kinuyo Tanaka
Japan 1952, 35mm, b/w, 98 min. Japanese with English subtitles



Kinuyo Tanaka *LOVE UNDER THE CRUCIFIX*

friday february 24 at 9pm

sunday february 26 at 7pm

WHERE CHIMNEYS ARE SEEN

ENTOTSU NO MIERU BASHO

Tanaka stars alongside Ken Uehara as a newly-wed older couple living in a working-class industrial area of Tokyo in Goshō’s beloved masterpiece and sterling example of the *shichomingeki*, the popular dramas of domestic life that were aimed principally towards female audiences. Written by Hideo Oguni, best known as screenwriter for Akira Kurosawa and for *Ikiru* in particular, *Where Chimneys are Seen* uses its minimal yet deeply satisfying narrative to focus on revealing details of the daily lives of the older couple and that of the younger husband and wife renting the apartment upstairs. Both a hard-hitting drama and a gentle comedy (a rare tonal balance that, in fact, recalls *Ikiru*), *Where Chimneys are Seen* is one of the lasting classics of postwar Japanese cinema. While the film intertwines the stories of the two couples it leans gravitationally towards Tanaka, who delivers a remarkable and revealing monologue that sits at the emotional heart of the film and offers yet another indelible high point of her acting career.

Directed by Heinosuke Goshō. With Kinuyo Tanaka, Ken Uehara, Hideko Takamine
Japan 1953, 35mm, b/w, 108 min. Japanese with English subtitles



Kinuyo Tanaka *GIRLS OF THE NIGHT*

JOYCE CHOPRA, LADY DIRECTOR

FEBRUARY 3



Joyce Chopra and Claudia Weill *JOYCE AT 34*

she sold her half of the ownership and left for New York with only a handful of names and phone numbers of those in the business.

She eventually received her introduction to film production via the burgeoning art form of cinema verité and its passionate innovators Richard Leacock and D.A. Pennebaker. It was with Leacock that she would make her first film, the documentary short *Happy Mother’s Day* (1963), which followed the media frenzy surrounding the birth of quintuplets in South Dakota. This led to more documentaries mostly for public television—including the autobiographical short *Joyce at 34* made during her

As one of very few women in the film industry, Joyce Chopra (b. 1936) details her hazardous journey through filmmaking in a frank and revealing new memoir, *Lady Director*. Suffering abuse at the hands of men since an early age, she elucidates the experiences of an independent woman in personal and professional relationships, as well as the tricky life of a filmmaker working within and outside of Hollywood, made trickier by the ubiquity of male dominance and desire, rarely checked or challenged. Admitting both her mistakes and successes, Chopra delivers a page-turning, eye-opening behind-the-scenes diary, valuable not only to filmmakers, historians and women, but to all who chase dreams that seem out of reach. More than simply the tale of a woman working hard in film and life, Chopra’s book is also the saga of creative cinematic works, and the myriad obstacles they must surmount before appearing on the big screen in anything resembling their intended form.

Before she even envisioned herself as a skilled director, writer and editor, Chopra followed her inspiration regardless of means. After college and a stint in Paris, she and a friend—with \$200 between them—opened the legendary Club 47, a café that hosted blues, jazz and folk musicians in Harvard Square—now most famous for launching the career of Joan Baez. Despite the club’s success, Chopra was unable to ignore a seemingly irrational desire to make films, so

pregnancy. Meanwhile, she and her second husband, writer Tom Cole, attempted to collaborate on narrative films with his scripts and her direction. After she successfully produced a play of Cole's for the series *American Playhouse*, PBS agreed to provide some initial funding for an adaptation of a Joyce Carol Oates short story with Chopra finally at the helm.

Winning the Grand Jury Prize (Dramatic) at Sundance and immense critical acclaim, *Smooth Talk* was an auspicious start to what Chopra envisioned as a long career in feature films. This dream was soon derailed by Hollywood's corrupt power structure shaped by misogyny and delicate egos. When not entirely blocked from seeing her idea to fruition—as with her adaptation of Jay McInerney's novel *Bright Lights, Big City*—she was insidiously undermined, as in the case of Diane Keaton's pet project *The Lemon Sisters* (1989). After too many run-ins with major players, she was essentially blacklisted from Hollywood and turned to the parallel reality of television. Seen at the time as a lesser form of filmmaking, the world of television proved slightly less patriarchal, and Chopra began the next phase of her career directing many “movies of the week” as well as individual series episodes. More recently, she made the documentary *Gramercy Stories* (2008)—about a safe home for gay and transgender teens in New York—and she takes part in the work of BYkids, an organization that helps young people across the globe tell their stories through film with the guidance of an experienced filmmaker.

We are thrilled to welcome Joyce Chopra to the Harvard Film Archive to screen and discuss her early, trailblazing documentary *Joyce at 34* as well as the digitally restored *Smooth Talk*, which is now enjoying a renaissance as a lost gem of 80s independent cinema and early testimony to Laura Dern's uncanny talent. — BG

Signed copies of Joyce Chopra's 2022 memoir *Lady Director: Adventures in Hollywood, Television and Beyond* will be available for purchase before and after the show. Film descriptions by Brittany Gravely.

Special thanks: Stacey Lewis—Vice President and Director of Publicity, Marketing and Sales, City Lights Booksellers and Publishers, and Jake Perlin.

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
JOYCE CHOPRA IN PERSON
friday february 3 at 7pm
SMOOTH TALK

Transforming the spare Joyce Carol Oates short story “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” into a rich coming of age drama with a dark center, Chopra collaborated with her screenwriting husband Tom Cole to tenderly craft and perfectly cast her feature debut. The heart of *Smooth Talk* is the complexity of Laura Dern's performance as Connie, who is awakening to her sexual desires and those she elicits in men. Navigating the different tensions of both her fraught home life and various suburban teenage hangouts, she simultaneously radiates naiveté, sensitivity and a rebellious wildness. The latter draws the attentions of a handsome but unsettling stranger—played with controlled menace by Treat

Williams. His disturbing pursuit culminates in an agonizing showdown with Connie, who faces a stark ending to her adolescence. In her first starring role, Dern immediately caught Hollywood's eye, and even Joyce Carol Oates conceded, “Laura Dern is so dazzlingly right as ‘my’ Connie that I may come to think that I modeled the fictitious girl on her...”

Directed by Joyce Chopra. With Laura Dern, Treat Williams, Mary Kay Place
 US 1985, DCP, color, 92 min

Preceded by

JOYCE AT 34

Featuring the first live birth broadcast on television, *Joyce at 34* was a revolutionary film at a time when women were still having trouble with locked doors, never mind the glass ceilings. Chopra enlisted filmmaker Claudia Weill to document the last months of

her pregnancy as a happily working woman. The swiftly moving drama casually touches on men's conflicting ideas of their wives' lives and the fluctuating feelings of the expectant mother, as well as the limited options and repressed frustrations of Chopra's mother's peers, who gather for their monthly luncheon. Even Chopra's progressive husband—whose appearance in the delivery room also added shock value at the time—admits to his blind spots and reluctance to take up some of the household slack so that she can have her career and a baby too.

Joyce at 34 courtesy of the Reserve Film and Video Collection of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. This film has been preserved with funding from the National Film Preservation Foundation.

Directed by Joyce Chopra and Claudia Weill
 US 1972, 16mm, color, 28 min



Joyce Chopra *SMOOTH TALK*

THE EVER-EXPANDING CINEMA OF ERNIE GEHR

FEBRUARY 10 – FEBRUARY 11



Ernie Gehr *SUNDAY IN PARIS*

Ernie Gehr (b. 1941) is one of the key filmmakers to emerge from the Structuralist Cinema movement that flourished in the 1960s and 1970s, led by celebrated artists such as Hollis Frampton, Paul Sharits and Michael Snow as well as, somewhat tangentially, Joyce Wieland and George Landow. Whether working in 16mm, video or, most recently, digital cinema, Gehr has steadily embraced the ethos of structuralist-materialist filmmaking by inventively exploring the material and experiential specificities of the evolving medium. Gehr has gone further still by ceaselessly reinventing the moving image itself to boldly challenge preconceived notions of cinema and habitual vision. From his earliest work, such as his now classic 16mm films *Serene Velocity* and *Side/Walk/Shuttle*, Gehr has used his camera and careful eye to dramatically transform everyday locations—in these cases, a university corridor and a glass hotel elevator, respectively—into zones where time and gravity seem to follow alternate rules, leaving the viewer deliriously unmoored. Gehr's often playful formal rigor has been increasingly complemented in recent years by an engagement with history—most often the history

of cinema and of cities. Frequently shooting on the streets of his adopted hometown, Gehr has found in New York City streetscapes an endless field of multilayered visual scenes that unfold in his films both as dazzling, vision-bending abstractions, and as meditations on the ceaseless cycles of destruction and construction that have locked the city in a state of perpetual transformation.

This two-program showcase of Ernie Gehr's filmmaking over the past ten years begins with a pair of dazzling films, both works from longer series, which underscore the dialogue, active across his oeuvre, between Modernist Art and cinema. *Sensations of Light 7* uses flicker effect to create an intensely animated return to a variation of sorts of Albers' famous *Homage to a Square*, now using variable speeds and rhythms to generate a rich series of effects and aftereffects that ignite the screen. Agnes Martin, Barnett Newman and Bridget Riley, among others, are recalled in the mesmerizing linear abstractions of *Auto-Collider XX*, part of a long series made using footage shot while driving through the streets of San Francisco.

The other films in the program together give special emphasis to the urban focus of Gehr's recent work. While *Construction Sight* uses slow motion and a low-fi soundtrack recalling his earlier *Reverberation* to observe uncanny patterns of movement and mirroring, *Back in the Park* observes the parallel world of shadows on a sun-drenched Manhattan day. It was on a certain *Sunday in Paris* that Gehr, meanwhile, filmed one of his most delightfully adventurous films using careful "cuts" to render the image into a fascinating turnstile of displaced perspective. Among the most beautiful and poignant of Gehr's city films are three—*Delirium*, *The Weather Report* and *Flying Over Brooklyn*—that were made within steps from his Carroll Gardens home since the coming of COVID. Quiet works of resilience, the films affirm Gehr's incredible resourcefulness as well as his understanding of vision itself as a creative and transformative art. — HG

The Harvard Film Archive is extremely happy and proud to welcome back Ernie Gehr for two evenings of recent films and conversations.

Special thanks: Laura Frahm—Art, Film, and Visual Studies Department, Harvard.

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS

ERNIE GEHR IN PERSON

friday february 10 at 7pm

SENSATIONS OF LIGHT 7

Directed by Ernie Gehr
US 2014, digital video, color, silent, 7.5 min

AUTO-COLLIDER XX

Directed by Ernie Gehr
US 2014, digital video, color, 11 min

UNDERTOW

Directed by Ernie Gehr
US 2019, digital video, color, 14.5 min

DELIRIUM

Directed by Ernie Gehr
US 2020, digital video, b/w & color, 14.5 min

THE WEATHER REPORT

Directed by Ernie Gehr
US 2022, digital video, color, silent, 9 min

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS

ERNIE GEHR IN PERSON

saturday february 11 at 7pm

SUNDAY IN PARIS

Directed by Ernie Gehr
US 2016, digital video, color, 16.5 min

CONSTRUCTION SIGHT

Directed by Ernie Gehr
US 2019, digital video, color, 36 min

BACK IN THE PARK

Directed by Ernie Gehr
US 2019, digital video, color, 11 min

FLYING OVER BROOKLYN

Directed by Ernie Gehr
US 2020, digital video, color, 4.5 min



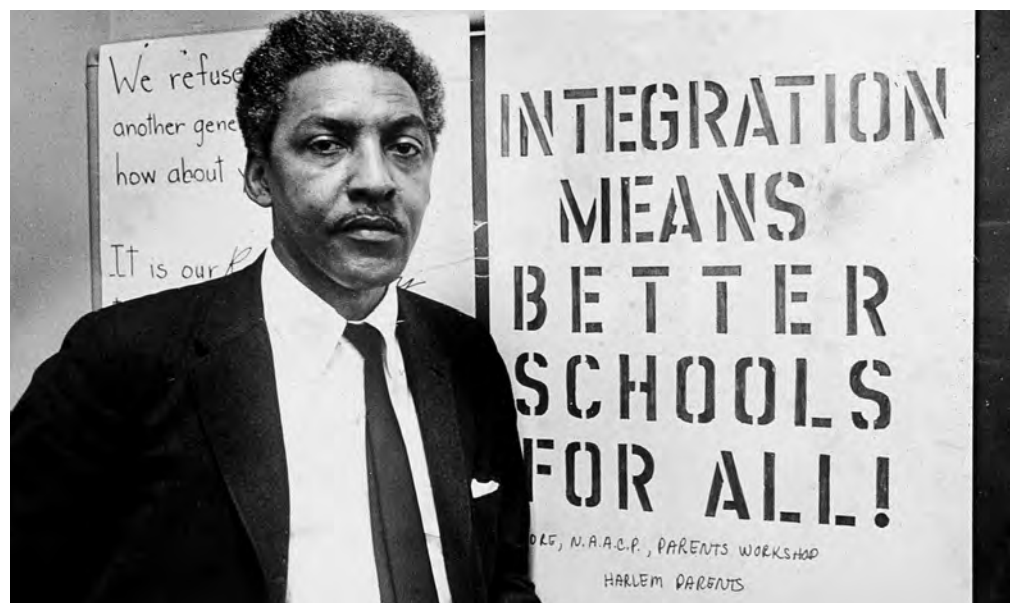
Ernie Gehr BACK IN THE PARK

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

FEBRUARY 17 – FEBRUARY 27

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King and Coretta Scott King, the Harvard Film Archive and the Harvard Library Office for Antiracism are collaborating to screen and discuss two films vital to the Black American story: the documentary *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin* about a civil rights pioneer left out of history because of his choice to live as a gay man in an intolerant time, and an independent feature from the 80s, *Losing Ground* by Kathleen Collins. The star of this singular film, Seret Scott, will not only be in conversation after the screening, but she will hold a special talk earlier in the day at Lamont Library regarding her experiences on stage in the era of civil rights.

Special thanks: Jerome Offord, Jr. PhD, Associate University Librarian for Antiracism, Harvard; FAS Office for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, Harvard; Office of Claudine Gay, President-elect, Harvard.



Nancy D. Kates and Bennett Singer BROTHER OUTSIDER: THE LIFE OF BAYARD RUSTIN

FREE WITH HARVARD ID

NANCY D. KATES IN CONVERSATION WITH JEROME OFFORD

friday february 17 at 7pm

BROTHER OUTSIDER: THE LIFE OF BAYARD RUSTIN

The film shares the journey and life of a civil rights trailblazer, activist and strategist who was excluded based on his decision to live authentically as an openly gay man. Organizing the first "freedom rides" in the 40s, the charismatic Rustin had a significant influence on Martin Luther King, Jr. He was the force behind Dr. King's non-violence movement and the pioneering catalyst behind the 1963 March on Washington, yet no one has heard of him. In his own time, he was arrested, threatened and denied his rightful position as a leader in the civil rights community. *Brother Outsider* attempts to help right this historical injustice by filling in the fascinating details and painting a vibrant, complicated portrait. After the film, we will have an interactive discussion focusing on Dr. King's vision of the Beloved Community and the role of Mr. Rustin, often regarded as "the unknown hero of the civil rights movement." — Jerome Offord

Directed by Nancy D. Kates and Bennett Singer
US 2003, digital video, b/w, 83 min

One of the first narrative feature films directed by a Black woman, Kathleen Collins' *Losing Ground* never received a commercial release, and after its premiere in 1982 and a subsequent screening at MoMA in January 1983, it showed only sporadically over the years. Collins died in 1988 at the age of forty-six, having made just this miraculous film and a short. *Losing Ground* remains an exquisite anomaly in feature filmmaking: a window into the realities and fantasies of an intellectual Black woman and her artist husband. To this day, there are no comparable characters to these utterly unique beings on screen.

Fortunately in 2011, writer and professor Terri Francis, then teaching at Yale, reached out to Collins' daughter, and soon, funding for a partial restoration of the film was raised. Ronald Gray, the film's cinematographer, oversaw the color timing of the scanned and digitally cleaned negatives, which were then shot back to film. By accessing the original negatives and restoring the audio with newly discovered magnetic sound elements, the preservation resulted in vast improvements in both picture and audio quality and, for the first time, 35mm prints of the film. In 2015, Milestone Films released it commercially, to the critical acclaim and celebration this remarkable film has long deserved. — Brian Meacham, Yale Film Archive

The Harvard Film Archive welcomes Seret Scott to the cinematheque for a conversation after the film and earlier in the afternoon, she will also speak about her career in the theater as an actor, director and writer. The talk will be held at 3pm in the Lamont Forum Room, Lamont Library in Harvard Yard. RSVP required. Visit the HFA website for details.

Losing Ground was restored by the Yale Film Archive and The Film Foundation. Funding provided by the Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation.

**FREE ADMISSION – RSVP REQUIRED
LAMONT LIBRARY FORUM ROOM**

monday february 27 at 4pm

ARTIST HOUSING TALK WITH SERET SCOTT

Artist Housing grew out of the realization that my personal experiences at any time were literally rooted in my *housing* of the moment... whether that *housing* was physical, spiritual, artistic, political.

Over the years as a visiting artist at universities and forums, I was struck by how many times I was queried about my early experiences as a Black creative artist. Since I'd kept loose journals for years, I decide to share aloud my theater/activist stories, which ranged from the 60s civil rights movement, the Vietnam war, counterculture NYC and being Black in early 70s France, up to and including my acting-directing-writing career today. — Seret Scott

**\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
SERET SCOTT IN PERSON**

monday february 27 at 7pm

LOSING GROUND

Seret Scott stars as Sara Rogers, a professor of philosophy researching the philosophical and religious meaning of the "ecstatic experience." Her husband Victor—played by legendary writer/actor/director Bill Gunn—is an artist who rents a house in the country to celebrate his sale of a painting to a museum, but their relationship is tested by both Victor's growing involvement with a young woman who models for him and Sara's decision to return to the city to accept the invitation of one of her students to act in his film. Collins drew on her own life story and identity—as an internationally known playwright, a voting rights activist and professor of film—to present the life and marriage of a Black couple, in its ordinariness and its complexity, in itself a political statement at the time.

Directed by Kathleen Collins. With Seret Scott, Bill Gunn, Duane Jones
US 1982, 35mm, color, 86 min



Kathleen Collins *LOSING GROUND*

REMAPPING LATIN AMERICAN CINEMA: CHILEAN FILM/VIDEO 1963 – 2013

FEBRUARY 25 – APRIL 17

Chile es muy difícil de asir porque es metamórfico. / Chile is difficult to grasp because it is metaphoric. — Raúl Ruiz

Chile's cinema remains the least internationally known of Latin America's major cinemas. Often overshadowed by the historically larger and more widely distributed cinemas of Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, the rich history of Chilean filmmaking has also been obscured, paradoxically, by the long history of political documentary to which Chilean cinema is all too often reduced. This program gathers key works from the 1968 period to the early 2000s—many of them largely unseen in the US and some only recently rediscovered—to offer an alternate history of Chilean cinema that traces the dialogue between historical and contemporary cinema and gives special emphasis to overlooked films and filmmakers. Inspired by two classes we taught together in 2020 and 2021—the first designed as a "remapping" of Latin American cinema as a concept, and the second a deep focus on Chilean cinema and video—this program pairs work of the New Chilean Cinema by directors such as Miguel Littín and Carlos Flores del Pino with films of the Novísimo Cine Chileno of the early 2000s to make clear the recurrence, with important differences, of thematic, aesthetic and ideological issues recurrent across this longer span. In addition, the vital yet rarely acknowledged work of woman directors in Chile is highlighted by including films by Valeria Sarmiento, Marilú Mallet, Angelina Vásquez and Alicia Scherson. Our program launches an ongoing initiative entitled "Remapping Latin American Cinema" that will see the Harvard Film Archive and David Rockefeller Center collaborating with Latin American national film archives and film centers to explore new perspectives on filmmaking across the region. — Haden Guest and Dominga Sotomayor

Descriptions by Haden Guest unless otherwise noted.

Special thanks: Marcela Ramos—David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard; Ignacio Azcueta—Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, Harvard.





Raúl Ruiz *LITTLE WHITE DOVE*

saturday february 25 at 7pm

THE CHILEAN CHARLES BRONSON (OR EXACTLY IDENTICAL) *EL CHARLES BRONSON CHILENO: O IDÉNTICAMENTE IGUAL*

In addition to working on a clandestine film attacking the Pinochet regime, Carlos Flores also directed a series of subversive films that indirectly critiqued the dictatorship's brutal repression, conservatism and manipulation of popular culture as a form insidious distraction. *The Chilean Charles Bronson (Or Exactly Identical)* offers a meditation on stardom and Cold War cultural imperialism centered on the winner of a televised look-alike competition whose resemblance to the eponymous movie star (whose name is itself an invention) pulls him into a hall of mirrors that Flores refracts further with great verve and humor. An unacknowledged, even phantom, precursor to Larraín's *Tony Manero*, Flores' film was never released theatrically in Chile and remains largely unseen, with this being its first public screening in the US. A conversation between Carlos Flores, Dominga

Sotomayor and Haden Guest about the film and his career will be available on the HFA website.

Directed by Carlos Flores del Pino
Chile 1981, DCP, b/w, 70 min. Spanish with English subtitles

saturday february 25 at 9pm

TONY MANERO

Pablo Larraín's nimbly confrontational approach to history was first revealed in this controversial breakthrough film, a gripping and disquieting story of a machismo brute whose unhealthy obsession with disco dancing and John Travolta inspires his unnatural violence. A Stygian vision of late 1970s Santiago set largely at night and in dim, dank interiors, *Tony Manero* punctuates its literal and thematic darkness with flashes of vicious and unsettling black humor. *Tony Manero* was cowritten by Larraín and the film's telegenic star, Alfredo Castro, whose uncanny resemblance to Al Pacino echoes the dancer's manic imitation of Travolta's eponymous disco idol and, by extension, the aggressive embrace of American free-market capitalism by the Pinochet dictatorship.

Directed by Pablo Larraín. With Alfredo Castro, Amparo Noguera, Héctor Morales
Chile 2008, 35mm, color, 97 min. Spanish and English with English subtitles

friday march 3 at 7pm

LITTLE WHITE DOVE *PALOMITA BLANCA*

In 1973 Raúl Ruiz was invited by then-fledgling national film company Chilefilms to direct the biggest-budgeted Chilean feature to date, an adaptation of the best-selling eponymous novel by Enrique Lafourcade. *Palomita blanca* is a coming-of-age story of a young girl from a poor background who falls in love with the scion of a wealthy upper-class family. From the novel Ruiz maintained only its formulaic fairytale plot and detailed background of youth culture in the last years of the Unidad Popular, most vividly captured in a documentary-like outdoor concert scene. More striking are the ways Ruiz invented a new dimension in the story by creating richly and often self-consciously theatrical spaces to explore his career-long fascination with language as a vehicle for dizzying, and at times absurdist, performances of ineluctable meaning. Although it was designed and seemingly destined to be a popular hit— not

only because of its popular source, but also because of its soundtrack by the hugely influential psychedelic and progressive rock band Las Jaivas—*Palomita blanca*'s September 1973 premiere was abruptly cancelled by the coup d'état that violently upturned the country and drove Ruiz and many of his contemporaries into exile. Believed lost after the immediate closure and seizure of Chilefilms by Pinochet's forces, almost twenty years later the negative of *Palomita blanca* was discovered hidden in plain sight in its original storage space and at last received a delayed premiere and rapturous reception as one of Ruiz's first major works.

Directed by Raúl Ruiz. With Beatrice Lapido, Rodrigo Ureta, Luis Alarcón
Chile 1992, DCP, color, 125 min. Spanish with English subtitles

saturday march 4 at 7pm

JACKAL OF NAHUELTORO

EL CHACAL DE NAHUELTORO

Miguel Littín's now legendary debut feature is a crucial work of the New Chilean Cinema, a transformational movement that ushered an urgently realist and political imperative into Chilean filmmaking. Based on the true story of an impoverished drifter whose seemingly inexplicable cold-blooded murder of a widow and her five young children shocked the nation and set in motion a fierce debate about penal reform, *El Chacal de Nahueltoro* revisits the crime to ask penetrating questions about the class system and responsibility of the state towards its citizens. Following the tragic story of the killer's difficult life as an abused orphan who never receives an education, *El Chacal* convincingly insists on holding to task the sociocultural conditions that shaped a life lost to indolence, alcohol and dark forces and that can push one to commit the most heinous of crimes. The cinematography of celebrated cameraman Héctor Ríos Henríquez gives haunting life to the landscapes whose vast indifference to the gripping human drama speak to the larger vision of the film.

Directed by Miguel Littín. With Nelson Villagra, Shenda Román, Marcelo Romo
Chile 1969, DCP, b/w, 95 min. Spanish with English subtitles

saturday march 4 at 9pm

TO KILL A MAN *MATAR A UN HOMBRE*

Like *El Chacal de Nahueltoro* to which it plays subtle homage, Alejandro Fernández's rigorously restrained study of violence and justice uses a true



Pablo Larraín *TONY MANERO*



Alejandro Fernández Almendras *TO KILL A MAN*

story to offer an engaging allegory about the relationship of the state to its citizens. In this case, the hero is a lonely forester tormented by an abusive, bullying neighbor seemingly determined to push him over the edge. *To Kill a Man* is notable for its detached camera, which uses long sequence shots to give equal focus to the landscapes and cityscapes as to the action that unfolds within them. Fernández makes careful use of slow time both to raise the suspense of his film and to evoke the frustrated waiting for intervention from a bureaucratic and ineffective criminal justice system.

Directed by Alejandro Fernández Almendras. With Daniel Candia, Alejandra Yañez, Daniel Antivilo
Chile/France 2014, digital video, color, 82 min. Spanish with English subtitles

sunday march 5 at 3pm

EL PEJESAPO

In José Luis Sepúlveda's sprawling urban tale, the camera moves around its characters like breath traveling through the body. A middle-aged man who has lived in the area close to the Río Maipo near the south of Santiago, Daniel is faced with the limitations of his rural life after a suicide attempt and—while confronting his friends, family, and community members—is forced to leave home and find his way through Santiago. His journey takes him through the city's commercial centers, sites of queer performance and, in the film's final moments, electrifying left-wing protests. Senses become magnified in this film as the fluid, roving camera allows us to see the extremes of digital cinema. The script, a mixture of documentary and fiction, interrogates issues of sexuality and transgender identity in Chile, posing the broader question of how, when, and where these characters can freely express their desires. Daniel's meditations are manifold as he tries to find employment, embed himself in the urban environment, and find love while confronting the anti-trans sentiment of his world. By the end of the film, he talks to the camera directly, allowing audiences to inhabit his memories, fears and hopes. Despite the constant close-ups and nervy sound design, the film is remarkably noninvasive: showing people who are always on the move, exploring their perspectives with honesty and passion, and finding their light. — *Alejandro Eduarte*

Directed by José Luis Sepúlveda. With Héctor Silva, Jessica Calderón, Yani Escobar
Chile 2007, DCP, color, 98 min. Spanish with English subtitles

sunday march 5 at 7pm

NAOMI CAMPBELL

Camila José Donoso and Nicolás Videla's portrait of Santiago's trans community is a transformative, meditative opus. Yermén, a trans woman who wants gender affirmation surgery, explores the outskirts of Santiago as she tries to find the right medical venue. Her search eventually takes her to the offices of an exploitative reality show, where she meets an Afro-Chilean trans woman who declares she wants to look like Naomi Campbell after her surgery. The film centers around these women's fantasies, dreams and joys, countering the high-octane pace of reality television to propose a different kind of realism. Alternating between the straightforward telling of Yermén's narrative and documentary-style sections during which she surveys the streets around her with a handheld camera, the film's texture is brilliantly recursive. And within this urban landscape, tradition



Alicia Scherson *PLAY*

and modernity are equally present; Yermén works at a call center for tarot card readers, and an ongoing topic of discussion is the dominance of US modeling and beauty standards. *Naomi Campbell's* melancholy is as topographical as it is social, and its focus on interior spaces, and those who are left behind by commercialized fantasies of womanhood, ultimately illuminates this film's remarkable insight and integrity. — *Alejandro Eduarte*

Directed by Camila José Donoso and Nicolás Videla. With Paula Dinamarca, Ingrid Mancilla, Josefina Ramírez
Chile 2013, DCP, color, 83 min. Spanish with English subtitles

monday march 6 at 7pm

PLAY

Filed in a hybrid technological style, Alicia Scherson's dramedy makes use of computers, headphones and video games to bring to life the story of Cristina, a young indigenous woman navigating early-aughts Santiago. A caretaker for an elderly white man, she becomes interested in Tristán, a young worker, but can they make their chemistry work given the social boundaries that separate them? As her journey of desire takes her through the construction sites, homes, malls, gardens and lush parks of Santiago, Cristina's journey becomes a topographical, as well as an affective, odyssey. Tristán's interest in an older, wealthier woman allows Cristina to express her own buried desire, and her emotions become aligned with the city's texture and technology; midway through the film, an apartment complex transforms into a video game arena, with Cristina as the whip-smart protagonist battling her way through the digital world. The film's tonal registers are wry and



Camila José Donoso and Nicolás Videla *NAOMI CAMPBELL*

wistful in equal measure, and it also poses questions about indigeneity and class, as Cristina navigates racialization and labor issues alongside her hope of love. When sunset arrives at the end of the film, it is a resplendent moment that remakes the entire visual landscape, turning it from a three-dimensional skyline into a sight straight out of a painting, one filled with orange and blue hues. — *Alejandro Eduarte*

Directed by Alicia Scherson. With Viviana Herrera, Andres Ulloa, Aline Küppenheim
Argentina/Chile 2005, DCP, color, 104 min. Spanish and Mapudungun with English subtitles

Preceded by

À VALPARAÍSO

Joris Ivens' cinematic odyssey surveys the coastal town of Valparaíso, displaying its dizzying heights, intricate transportation structures, and the countless monuments remaining from its colonial history. In just twenty-four minutes, the film is a brisk, engaging travelogue. It's also a studied anthropological and sociological portrait, with analyses ranging from the colonial imagination and its physical relics—the Alliance Française and statues of Spanish colonists among them—to its cultural practices and labor structures. We move at Valparaíso's pace throughout the film as the camera tracks the railway cars running up and down the mountainside, young children playing soccer on the hill, and the workers discussing the city's most fundamental issues. The film, formally and explicitly, poses questions about modernity and its relationship to catastrophe in Valparaíso, where, though the ocean is nearby, there is not steady access to drinking water. Paradoxes such as these power the film and provide a profound dialogic and aesthetic resonance. Like the city itself, *À Valparaíso* creates that most dangerous and enthralling of feelings: vertigo. — *Alejandro Eduarte*

Directed by Joris Ivens
France/Chile 1962, digital video, color, 24 min. In English

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS ANDRÉS DI TELLA IN PERSON

friday march 24 at 7pm

PHOTOGRAPHS FOTOGRAFÍAS

See description in *Andrés Di Tella* program p.17.

INTRODUCTION BY ANDRÉS DI TELLA

friday march 24 at 9:45pm

UNDER CONSTRUCTION (OR, THE PLACE I WAS BORN NO LONGER EXISTS) AQUÍ SE CONSTRUYE (O YA NO EXISTE EL LUGAR DONDE NACÍ)

See description in *Andrés Di Tella* program p.18.

sunday march 26 at 3pm

UNFINISHED DIARY

DIARIO INCONCLUSO/JOURNAL INACHEVÉ

Set in Canada, Marilú Mallet's elegiac documentary pushes the limits of the diary-film form: by depicting her exile from Chile, she directly involves her husband, her children and her community members in her reflections, both as characters and agents in the narrative. Her hypnotic camera tracks the rhythms of her new city, with cars rattling over wide avenues, vast interiors of malls and towering ski slopes, all indicating the agonizing duration and immense scale of exile. In addition to her own imagery, Mallet uses black-and-white archival footage of the Pinochet regime to reflect on, and make the audience visual-



Joris Ivens À VALPARAÍSO

ize, the forces that pushed her and thousands of other Chileans out of the country. Throughout the film, she interviews some of these exiles—among them, Isabel Allende—and contemplates her own family structure. Mallet's questions have massive implications for the ethics of both cinema and diaries. *What does it mean to make a film about Chile when she cannot physically reach it?* These inquiries become intensified during the bravura climax, when Mallet's husband has an argument with her about how she has made the film and why—ultimately leaving the viewer uncertain of not only the line between reality and fiction, but Mallet's own future beyond the film. —Alejandro Eduarte

Directed by Marilú Mallet
Chile/Canada 1982, 16mm, color, 50 min. French, English and Spanish with English subtitles

FRAGMENTS FROM AN UNFINISHED DIARY FRAGMENTOS DE UN DIARIO INACABADO

Filmmaker Angelina Vásquez was one of over 200,000 Chileans—including her contemporaries Marilú Mallet and Valeria Sarmiento—forced into exile following Augusto Pinochet's 1973 military coup. Returning from Finland ten years later in a secret effort to shoot *Fragmentos de un diario inacabado*, Vásquez was once again expelled from the country before filming even began. Finished from a distance, *Fragmentos* unites diaristic reflection and journalistic urgency in a formal triumph over the very authoritarian forces that fractured the process of its making. Vásquez weaves a pastiche of on-the-ground dispatches from Chile's cosmopolitan centers to rural villages of folk artists, military generals and civilian voices that present a defiant portrait of Chilean society under the Pinochet dictatorship. —Tiff Rekem

Directed by Angelina Vásquez
Chile/Finland 1983, DCP, color, 57 min. Spanish with English subtitles

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS ANDRÉS DI TELLA IN PERSON

monday march 27 at 7pm

DIARIES DIARIOS

See description in *Andrés Di Tella* program p.18.

sunday april 9 at 7pm

A film editor, director and screenwriter, Valeria Sarmiento (b. 1948) is known for her work in fiction centered on deconstructing the codes of melodrama and their female protagonists' plights, as well as her collaborations with her partner, filmmaker Raúl Ruiz (1941 – 2011), also featured in this series. In the

past years, her documentaries have garnered wider critical attention. This program is focused on two television documentaries filmed in the Caribbean that explore two aspects of Latin American identity.

In *A Man, When He's a Man*, Sarmiento interviewed men of all ages in Costa Rica about the meaning of romantic love. Through a montage of their responses, *boleros* and classic romantic films, the film produces a humorous, cunning reflection on masculinity and machismo in Latin America. *The Planet of Children* was filmed at one of the *palacios* (palaces) of the *Escuela de Pioneros* (School of Pioneers) in Cuba. This institution, founded in 1979 by Fidel Castro and composed of more than one hundred locations, allowed children to familiarize themselves with trades and jobs through role-playing. Centered on the children's experiences in this school, without any adult appearing before the camera, the film offers an entry to a singular pedagogical experience while also crafting a critical vision of one of the 20th century's defining political experiences—in Latin America and the world. —Ignacio Azcueta

A MAN, WHEN HE'S A MAN

EL HOMBRE CUANDO ES HOMBRE

Directed by Valeria Sarmiento
Costa Rica/France/West Germany 1982, 16mm, color, 66 min. Spanish with English subtitles

PLANET OF THE CHILDREN

EL PLANETA DE LOS NIÑOS

Directed by Valeria Sarmiento
France/Chile 1992, DCP, color, 62 min. Spanish with English subtitles

sunday april 16 at 3pm

Raúl Ruiz (1941 - 2011) was a filmmaker often heralded for prolific filmography, with his entire body of work still a mystery. His partner Valeria Sarmiento was his film editor and most frequent collaborator. After Ruiz's passing, Sarmiento has been recuperating and giving new life to Ruiz's films that were deemed lost, unfinished, or both. This program is centered on this newfound form of curatorship and collaboration.

We Will Now Call You Brother documents president Salvador Allende's first meeting with a Mapuche

community in Temuco. Filmed in 1971 and considered lost, this short film evokes a (possible pathway to socialism's relationship with indigenous communities) cut short by Pinochet's coup. *The Wandering Soap Opera* is structured around of Ruiz and Sarmiento's shared obsession over mass media. Filmed in 1991 and edited by Sarmiento in 2017, this film approaches different facets of national identity through a series of fictional *telenovela* fragments. Lastly, *The Tango of the Widower and its Distorting Mirror* (1967 – 2020) is a ghost story centered on Mr. Iriarte, a man whose life is turned upside down after the loss of his wife. Though six out of seven 35mm rolls of the film were found, the film had no sound. Valeria Sarmiento teamed with her collaborators Chamila Rodríguez and Galut Alarcón, did research among the surviving crew and actors, hired lip-readers to reconstruct the dialogue and re-dubbed the film.

These three films offer a privileged pathway into Ruiz's filmography, participating in his sui generis approach to politics, his playful relationship with identity and mass media, and his daring formal experimentation. —Ignacio Azcueta

THE WANDERING SOAP OPERA

LA TELENÓVELA ERRANTE

Directed by Raúl Ruiz and Valeria Sarmiento. With Luis Alarcón, Patricia Rivadeneira, Francisco Reyes
Chile 1992/2017, DCP, color, 80 min. Spanish with English subtitles

monday april 17 at 7pm

THE TANGO OF THE WIDOWER AND ITS DISTORTING MIRROR EL TANGO DEL VIUDO Y SU ESPEJO DEFORMANTE

Directed by Raúl Ruiz and Valeria Sarmiento. With Rubén Sotoconil, Claudia Paz, Luis Alarcón
Chile 1967/2020, DCP, b/w, 70 min. Spanish with English subtitles

Preceded by

WE WILL NOW CALL YOU BROTHER AHORA TE VAMOS A LLAMAR HERMANO

Directed by Raúl Ruiz
Chile 1971, DCP, color, 13 min. Mapudungun and Spanish with English subtitles

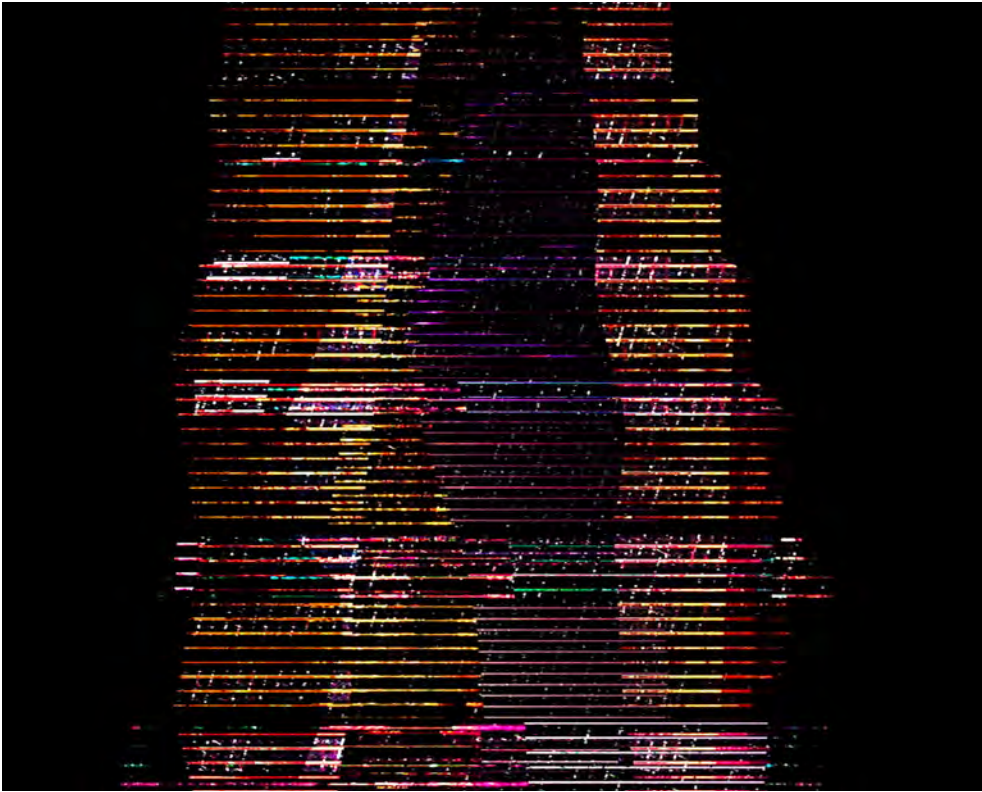


Raúl Ruiz and Valeria Sarmiento *THE WANDERING SOAP OPERA*

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
15	16	17	18	19	20 7PM LOVE LETTER P. 3	21 7PM FLOWING P. 3
22 3PM FLOWING P. 3 7PM THE WANDERING PRINCESS P. 3	23 7PM UGETSU P. 3	24	25	26	27 7PM FOREVER A WOMAN P. 4 9PM UGETSU P. 3	28
29 3PM LOVE LETTER P. 3 7PM THE MOON HAS RISEN P. 4	30 7PM SANSHO THE BAILIFF P. 4	31				



Alice Diop WE P. 19



Youjin Moon TELESTO P. 17

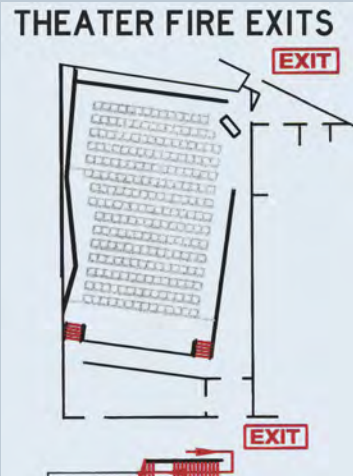


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FEBRUARY 2023

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			01	02	03 7PM JOYCE AT 34 SMOOTH TALK P. 6 joyce chopra in person	04 7PM THE LIFE OF OHARU P. 4
05 3PM FOREVER A WOMAN P. 4 7PM EQUINOX FLOWER P. 4	06 7PM NOBODY'S HERO P. 32	07	08	09	10 7PM SENSATIONS OF LIGHT 7 AUTO-COLLIDER XX UNDERTOW DELIRIUM THE WEATHER REPORT P. 7 ernie gehr in person	11 7PM SUNDAY IN PARIS CONSTRUCTION SIGHT BACK IN THE PARK FLYING OVER BROOKLYN P. 7 ernie gehr in person
12 3PM NOBODY'S HERO P. 32 7PM GIRLS OF THE NIGHT P. 4	13 7PM NOBODY'S HERO P. 32	14	15 7PM DE HUMANI CORPORIS FABRICA (2022) free screening organized by the arts, film, & visual studies department	16	17 7PM BROTHER OUTSIDER: THE LIFE OF BAYARD RUSTIN P. 7 nancy d. kates in person	18
19 3PM GIRLS OF THE NIGHT P. 4 7PM NOBODY'S HERO P. 32	20 7PM LOVE UNDER THE CRUCIFIX P. 5	21	22	23	24 7PM MOTHER P. 5 9PM WHERE CHIMNEYS ARE SEEN P. 5	25 7PM THE CHILEAN CHARLES BRONSON (OR EXACTLY IDENTICAL) P. 9 9PM TONY MANERO P. 9
26 3PM MOTHER P. 5 7PM WHERE CHIMNEYS ARE SEEN P. 5	27 4PM ARTIST HOUSING TALK P. 8 lamont library • free seret scott in person 7PM LOSING GROUND P. 8 seret scott in person	28				



Hong Sangsoo THE NOVELIST'S FILM P. 28



Med Hondo MES VOISINS P. 26

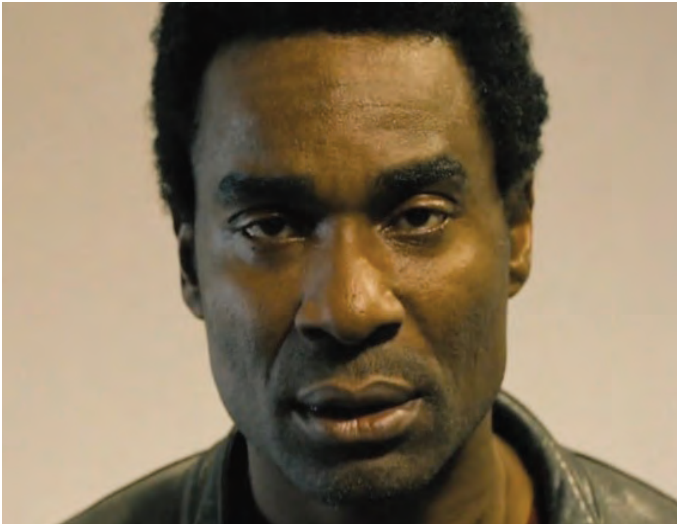
MARCH 2023

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			01	02	03 7PM LITTLE WHITE DOVE P. 9	04 7PM JACKAL OF NAHUELTORO P. 9 9PM TO KILL A MAN P. 9
05 3PM EL PEJESAPO P. 10 7PM NAOMI CAMPBEL P. 10	06 7PM À VALPARAÍSO PLAY P. 10	07	08	09	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 7PM GANYMEDE EUROPA IO LAOMEDEIA TELESTO ARCALIS P. 17 youjin moon in person	21	22 7PM HOW TO BLOW UP A PIPELINE (2022) free screening organized by the arts, film, & visual studies department	23	24 7PM PHOTOGRAPHS P. 17 andrés di tella in person 9:45PM UNDER CONSTRUCTION (OR, THE PLACE I WAS BORN NO LONGER EXISTS) P. 18 introduction by andrés di tella	25 7PM WE P. 19
26 3PM UNFINISHED DIARY P. 10 FRAGMENTS FROM AN UNFINISHED DIARY P. 11 7PM TOWARDS TENDERNESS DANTON'S DEATH P. 19	27 7PM DIARIES P. 18 andrés di tella in person	28	29	30	31 7PM FATHER'S DAY P. 20 kivu ruhorahoza in person	



Kinuyo Tanaka THE WANDERING PRINCESS P. 3

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						01 7PM SOLEIL O P. 23 introduction by aboubakar sanogo
02 3PM BALLADE AUX SOURCES P. 24 presentation by annabelle aventurin 7PM SARRAOUNIA P. 24 introduction by mahen bonetti	03 7PM GREY MATTER P. 21 kivu ruhorafoza in person	04	05	06	07 7PM EUROPA ... P. 21 introduction by kivu ruhorafoza 9PM THINGS OF THE AIMLESS WANDERER P. 21 introduction by kivu ruhorafoza	08 7PM BLACK LIGHT P. 24 9PM SARRAOUNIA P. 24
09 7PM A MAN, WHEN HE'S A MAN PLANET OF THE CHILDREN P. 11	10 7PM ST. OMER P. 20 alice diop in person	11	12	13	14 7PM WEST INDIES P. 25 9PM SOLEIL O P. 23	15 7PM WATANI P. 25 9PM WEST INDIES P. 25
16 3PM THE WANDERING SOAP OPERA P. 11 7PM LES BICOTS-NÈGRES, VOS VOISINS P. 25	17 7PM WE WILL NOW CALL YOU BROTHER THE TANGO OF THE WIDOWER AND ITS DISTORTING MIRROR P. 11	18	19 7PM ALL THE BEAUTY AND THE BLOODSHED (2022) free screening organized by the arts, film, & visual studies department	20	21 7PM WALK UP P. 28 9PM INTRODUCTION P. 28	22
23 3PM IN FRONT OF YOUR FACE P. 28 7PM WALK UP P. 28	24 7PM MES VOISINS FATIMA, THE ALGERIAN WOMAN OF DAKAR P. 26	25	26 7PM PASSING BEYOND PASSING (2004) free screening organized by the office for the arts and afvs • rsvp at office for the arts' website	27	28	29
30						



Kivu Ruhorahoza *EUROPA*, "BASED ON A TRUE STORY" P. 21



Raúl Ruiz and Valeria Sarmiento *THE TANGO OF THE WIDOWER...* P. 11

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	01	02	03	04	05 7PM THE NOVELIST'S FILM P. 28 9PM GRASS P. 28	06
07 3PM IN FRONT OF YOUR FACE P. 28 7PM THE WOMAN WHO RAN P. 28	08 7PM BLACK LIGHT P. 24	09	10	11	12 7PM THE WIND WILL CARRY US P. 29 9PM THE NOVELIST'S FILM P. 28	13 7PM HOTEL BY THE RIVER P. 28 9PM THE NOVELIST'S FILM P. 28
14 3PM HOTEL BY THE RIVER P. 28 7PM POLISARIO, A PEOPLE IN ARMS P. 26	15 7PM FIVE DEDICATED TO OZU P. 30	16	17	18	19 7PM TASTE OF CHERRY P. 30 9PM ABC AFRICA P. 30	20 7PM SHIRIN P. 30
21 3PM THE WIND WILL CARRY US P. 29 7PM CLOSE-UP P. 30	22 7PM 24 FRAMES P. 31	23	24	25	26 7PM LIKE SOMEONE IN LOVE P. 31 9PM TASTE OF CHERRY P. 30	27 7PM CERTIFIED COPY P. 31

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YOUJIN MOON. INNER AND OUTER SPACE

MARCH 20

Originally from Busan, South Korea, Youjin Moon (b. 1985) received her BFA in Oriental Painting from Seoul's Hongik University followed by two MFAs from MassArt—Painting in 2013 and Film/Video in 2015. Currently teaching at the latter, Moon has steadily accumulated a dazzling, idiosyncratic body of work shown in both installation and theatrical forms. Her work has been featured in museums, galleries, festivals and cinemas internationally. She received the Korean EXiS Award at the 12th and 16th Experimental Film and Video Festivals in Seoul.

Her foundation in painting as well as her work in photography and photochemical filmmaking inform a textural approach to her cinematic craft. Seemingly located in a dimension somewhat similar to this one, Moon's layered worlds orbit somewhere between inner and outer, macro and micro, Earth and space, liquid and solid, natural and constructed, scientific and science fiction. Even when accompanied by electronic beeps or buzzing, these transforming spaces manifest as living, breathing, complex cosmoses frequently grounded by familiar terrestrial sights, albeit slightly altered or distorted. All elements eventually fold into Moon's complex spatial fabric, which is in a constant state of flux, always transitioning to something breathtakingly new and intricate. In an interview in the *Boston Globe*, Moon notes that she is "interested in how collage can create mental imagery of dreamlike spaces. I revisit the same place and find simple things, unconventional moments, different times of day. Then I create an improvisational depiction of uncanny space." She manages to achieve another delicate balance: between the sense of a free-associative natural rhythm and a marked precision that governs both the exquisite imagery and its reactive, dynamic soundtrack.

In the work of the first part of the program, the atmospheres and elements of the moons of Jupiter influence the moods, palettes and composition of the videos. In these, she seems to extract an organic sentence out of the ones and zeroes. By the later pieces, however, the warmth of biology recedes, revealing the grids and geometry of technology—no less breathtaking. Throughout all the work, viewers are induced into a constant state of wonder and captivation, experiencing a sense of discovering realms unknown. Eyes wide open, relaxed yet alert, her audience is free to make myriad associations among dislocated galaxies where there is darkness and light, beauty and mystery within a perpetual cycle of countless births and deaths, both of this world and far beyond. — BG

The Harvard Film Archive welcomes Youjin Moon to the theater for a magical evening of film and discussion.

Special thanks: Nicholas Harkness and Susan Laurence—Korea Institute, Harvard.

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS YOUJIN MOON IN PERSON

monday march 20 at 7pm

GANYMEDE

Directed by Youjin Moon
US 2016, DCP, color, 9 min

LAOMEDEIA

Directed by Youjin Moon
US 2019, DCP, color, 11 min

EUROPA

Directed by Youjin Moon
US 2015, DCP, color, 12 min

TELESTO

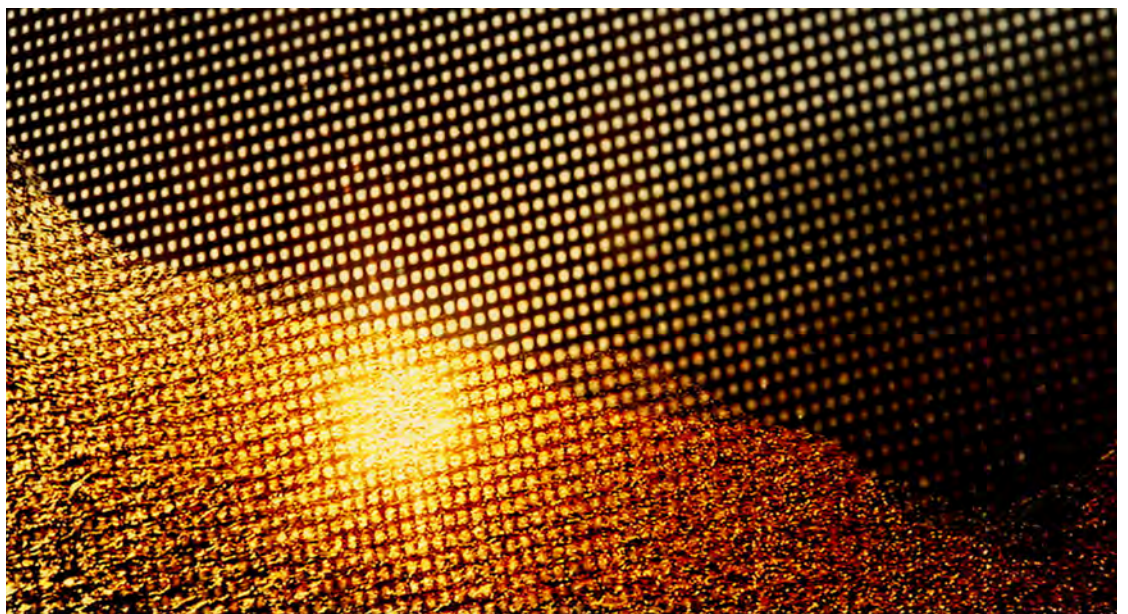
Directed by Youjin Moon
US 2020, DCP, color, 13 min

IO

Directed by Youjin Moon
US 2015, DCP, color, 11 min

ARCALIS

Directed by Youjin Moon
US 2022, DCP, color, 13 min



Youjin Moon GANYMEDE

ANDRÉS DI TELLA - ARCHIVES AND MEMORY

MARCH 24 – MARCH 27

Andrés Di Tella (b. 1958) is an Argentine filmmaker, writer and installation artist. Di Tella's work addresses collective experiences such as modernization and migration through a subjective lens, always concerning itself with the transmedial nature of art. *Fotografías* meditates on racism and displacement through a personal recollection of Di Tella's relationship with his mother. *Diarios* approaches life in a post-pandemic world. The film is structured as the fragments of a personal journal, weaving original footage and music clips and making room for the author to participate in reading live some select passages. — Ignacio Azcueta

Special thanks: Marcela Ramos—David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard; Ignacio Azcueta—Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, Harvard.



Andrés Di Tella PHOTOGRAPHS



\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS ANDRÉS DI TELLA IN CONVERSATION WITH IGNACIO AZCUETA

friday march 24 at 7pm

PHOTOGRAPHS FOTOGRAFÍAS

Aside from one trip to Madrás during Di Tella's childhood, his mother, psychologist Kamala Apparao, never mentioned anything about her Indian birthplace or ancestry to her son. Why not?

Photographs is the second installment of Andrés Di Tella's "family trilogy," a series of subjective documentaries centered on his family. Split between a first part in Argentina and

a second part in India, the film functions both as a meditation on the memory of a lost mother and a road movie that registers a trip to a culture that the filmmaker feels as his own, but that he, ultimately, knows little to nothing about. Exploring cultural missed encounters, the movie explores what the idea of a cultural or ethnic origin could mean and how cultural mythologies traffic within them manifold forms of oppression. Through a creative use of montage that mixes original footage, media and Di Tella's personal archives, *Photographs* also reflects on the often-deceptive optics of memory and how film can aid in mourning the past.

Directed by Andrés Di Tella
Argentina 2007, DCP, color, 110 min. Spanish with English subtitles



Ignacio Agüero *UNDER CONSTRUCTION...*

INTRODUCTION BY ANDRÉS DI TELLA

friday march 24 at 9:45pm

UNDER CONSTRUCTION (OR, THE PLACE I WAS BORN NO LONGER EXISTS) AQUÍ SE CONSTRUYE (O YA NO EXISTE EL LUGAR DONDE NACÍ)

It took some time to notice, perhaps, but with *Aquí se construye* Ignacio Agüero was beginning to transform, in splendid isolation, the argumentative or story-driven logic of the Latin American documentary. He replaced it with an associative, unemphatic language that played with moods and emotion in quite unexpected ways. The initial urge to simply document the changing face of a Santiago neighborhood revealed an extraordinary sensitivity to the metaphorical potential of images. What at first appearance might seem simply a melancholic portrait of a world on the cusp of extinction, becomes a searing

political indictment of the consumer culture of which we are all a part. — *Andrés Di Tella*

Directed by Ignacio Agüero
Chile 2000, digital video, color, 77 min. Spanish with English subtitles

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS ANDRÉS DI TELLA IN PERSON

monday march 27 at 7pm

DIARIES *DIARIOS*

The diary has that rare virtue of never quite being a “work” but, rather, always, a work in process. One writes it every day, without any correction, without knowing fully why, with no other objective than to capture something of the flow of life, the feeling of the moment. In the same way, my project *Diarios* is a project in the making, still unfinished. It embraces on equal footing the notes taken each day in the notebook, images recorded without any pretension on the cell phone, personal archive, material found on the internet. *Todo bicho que camina va a parar al asador*, as the gaucho saying goes: every walking beast ends up on the grill! Incidents from daily life, childhood memories, portraits of friends, chronicles of trips, readings and songs. The film diary has some illustrious predecessors: I think of the Brazilian David Perlov, or the Lithuanian Jonas Mekas. I also think of the tradition among visual artists: On Kawara, Andy Warhol, Carolee Schneemann. All very different, as if each one was doing something else. A genre that is not really a genre because it doesn't seem to have any rules. It allows me to dream of a kind of cinema that honors the visionary dream of Alexandre Astruc who, in an essay from 1948, glimpsed the future of cinema in the “camera-pen”: a form analogous to the writer's notebook, where the artist's thought-process is reflected as in the flight of the pen, but through images and sounds. The *cinématographe* unrestrained!

I began by making a series of shorts without knowing exactly what I would do with them, simply out of a desire to make brief, instant films that would take me out of the habitual rhythm of filmmaking: with luck, each feature takes two or three years of work; in one case, it took me seven years! These diaries, on the other hand, were made sometimes in a single



Andrés Di Tella performing *DIARIES*

day, or in a week or two. I was also interested in the dramaturgy of the short format: how to unfold a story, say, in one minute. This provides for a further challenge: How to present the diaries in public? How to convey the idea that this is not a feature film in episodes but, instead, something else? I have chosen nine pieces as a provisional sampler of the project (which for the moment counts twenty pieces). Trying out a combination of different durations: from one minute to twenty-five minutes. I have given them a roughly chronological order, with some license, allowing for the suggestion that this is just one part of the whole, that there are pieces missing in this jigsaw. And I decided to combine the shorts with live readings from my notebooks, so that these intrusions might break the spell of the feature film, of cinema.

The different presentations of the project at the Buenos Aires and San Sebastián film festivals allowed me to try out diverse permutations between images and texts, so that no one saw quite the same “film.” I realized that this mutating form of presentation was appropriate for what is, in the end, a mutating project. This screening at the Harvard Film Archive will be, in this literal sense, unrepeatable.

— *Andrés Di Tella, December 2022*

Directed by Andrés Di Tella
Argentina 2022, DCP and live performance, color, 90 min

ALICE DIOP'S SOUVENIRS OF LOST TIME

MARCH 25 – APRIL 10

The City of Love is one of the most well-represented metropolises in the history of cinema, but through the eyes of filmmaker Alice Diop (b. 1979), the French capital appears in a new light. This reorientation is less a matter of reality-bending aesthetics—the province of, say, a director like Jean-Pierre Jeunet—than of a shift in angle of view, a redirection of attention. Born in the largely immigrant banlieues of outer Paris to Senegalese immigrants, Diop became indelibly marked by her milieu from a young age and, like the many African and Arab subjects in her documentaries, came to regard the city center as something at best insufficiently welcoming, at worst outright hostile, to nonwhite outsiders. Though she earned a master's in History, a doctorate in Visual Sociology, and a degree in documentary filmmaking from La Fémis, Diop didn't pursue a life in the reputable quarters of academia—which is not to say her studies do not profoundly inform her art. Instead, she returned home to bear witness to the communities she grew up around, a self-described obsession that has now spanned over a decade's worth of films.



Alice Diop *WE*

Inspired by figures like Jean Rouch, Maurice Pialat and Claire Denis—all of whom are widely regarded as purveyors of unsentimental, poetically tinged naturalism—Diop trains her camera on the mundane. Her subjects are workaday Parisians, many of them long-distance commuters, whose lives are shaped in ways both imperceptible and overt by the injustices of modern-day France. Her first film, *Danton's Death* (2011), presents an emblematic figure in the form of an aspiring Black actor chafing against the subtle microaggressions of a reputable performing arts institute (and the self-perpetuating, societally reinforced anxieties within his own mind), though the film is somewhat anomalous in Diop's body of work for its ostensibly constricted focus. Subsequent films accommodate an increasingly panoramic point of view, culminating in the aptly titled *We* (2021), which surveys a wide swath of characters united by their proximity to the RER train that appears throughout Diop's filmography with Ozu-like regularity.

The word "characters" is not used indiscreetly, as Diop never disguises the fact that her films are collaborations with her camera subjects rather than fly-on-the-wall documentations of reality. In addition to their rigorous framing and suggestive editing, Diop's films foreground the presence of the director herself, either as an inquisitive off-screen interlocutor (in *Danton's Death* and *Towards Tenderness* (2016)), an on-screen participant and archival presence (in *We*), or an implicit protagonist surrogate (in *Saint Omer* (2022)). Furthermore, the immersive methods deployed in the preproduction stages of her films, with Diop spending considerable time gaining the trust of her subjects before cameras roll, pay off in the degree of intimacy captured onscreen, while also permitting a level of framing and blocking not achievable within the traditional understanding of vérité documentary. Diop of course has contemporaries in this practice—notably Roberto Minervini and Gianfranco Rosi,

whose oeuvres are similarly shaded with tensions between the immigrant and the native-born—but what is unique about her work is its homegrown specificity and deliberate superimposition of the personal and the collective.

With *Saint Omer*, Diop has made what many have called her first leap into fiction, though the film, albeit indulging further formal interventions than before, is ultimately not so distinguishable in intent or method from her prior work. (In one particularly notable parallel, we see shot-on-DV home movie footage of the film's protagonist as a child that uncannily resembles the home videos from Diop's own vault that recur throughout *We*.) Motivated by the 2016 infanticide trial of Fabienne Kabou, which Diop attended of her own volition, *Saint Omer* conjures a modern-day hybrid of *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928) and *Medea* (1969) that's gripped by the concerns coursing through Diop's documentaries: the phenomenological experience of the immigrant in France; the reverberations of history; the inextricable bonds of family and the complexities of the mother-daughter relationship. As a piece of testimony to a multifaceted woman who has been othered by the French judicial system and media, the film is also in line with the modest but essential aim at the core of Diop's entire filmography: the desire to represent the unrepresented and, as it's put in *We*, to "have a souvenir" of lost time. — Carson Lund



Alice Diop TOWARDS TENDRESSNESS

The Gardner Film Study Center Fellowship, established in the name of pioneering filmmaker and FSC founder Robert Gardner, is awarded annually to outstanding filmmakers around the world. The fellowship comes with a stipend to be directed to a filmmaker's work and an invitation to join the community of FSC fellows and CMP students at Harvard for a visit including screenings and discussions. Diop, this year's recipient, will also spend an evening at the HFA with her latest film, *Saint Omer*.

Film descriptions by Carson Lund.

Special thanks: Joana Pimenta, Julie Mallozzi, Cozette Russell—Film Study Center, Harvard; Alya Belgaroui-Delat—Wild Bunch International.

saturday march 25 at 7pm

WE NOUS

The move in Diop's documentary filmmaking from individual subjects to a collective subject reaches its apex in *We*, a carefully composed, Wiseman-esque tapestry of quotidian scenes from across Paris, all of them linked by their proximity to the north-south RER commuter train that runs through the suburb of the filmmaker's youth. Divvying focus between labor and leisure, immigrant and native, old and young, white and Black, and rich and poor, *We* attempts to capture the elusive character of a city, gently interrogating popular concepts of community and national identity. By juxtaposing the toils of service workers (a Senegalese nursing home caregiver, a Malian mechanic) against the leisure activities (game hunting, historical reenactments) of wealthier Parisians, the film reveals starkly opposed realities coexisting in the same city, but *We* offers much more than an exercise in dialectics. Diop also makes room for incursions into her family history with intimate archival footage of her father, which offers further context into the sense of exile and longing that permeates much of the film's diasporic ensemble.

Directed by Alice Diop. With Marcel Balnoas, Ethan Balnoas, Florence Roche
France 2021, DCP, color, 115 min. French with English subtitles

sunday march 26 at 7pm

TOWARDS TENDRESSNESS VERS LA TENDRESSSE

The cruelties, hypocrisies and vulnerabilities of toxic masculinity come under the microscope in *Towards*

Tenderness, Diop's compassionate but clear-eyed study of four men living in the banlieues of Paris: Régis, Rachid, Patrick and Anis. Having gained her subjects' trust well before embarking on the production, Diop elicits intimate and wide-ranging confessions over a microphone and pairs these voiceover ruminations with restaged footage from everyday life in which the swaggering behaviors and poses on display often run counter to the ideas being expressed verbally. The director is again an active participant during the interviews, guiding the men toward self-reckoning with questions that dare them to examine the root sources of their often misogynistic attitudes toward women and their anxieties around the giving and receiving of love. Far more than a gotcha-style exposé, *Towards Tenderness* digs deeply into four troubled psyches to reveal a broader portrait of the developmental challenges embedded within a low-income, immigrant-heavy milieu.

Directed by Alice Diop
France 2016, DCP, color, 38 min. French with English subtitles

DANTON'S DEATH LA MORT DE DANTON

With the ostensibly simple scenario of an aspiring Black actor struggling to make it in Paris, Diop's debut *Danton's Death* weaves a rich tapestry of ideas about class, race, careerism and the effects of all these pressures on the developing human psyche. Steve Tientcheu, a man in his late twenties from the public housing outskirts of Paris who idolizes French cinema heavyweights like Jean Gabin and Jean-Paul Belmondo, is the subject of Diop's

probing camera, which rarely leaves his side during this hourlong study. Eschewing much contextualizing footage of Tientcheu's life outside his training at the prestigious Cours Simon drama school, Diop instead immerses herself in her subject's acting classes, which offer sobering reminders of the limited opportunities available to and double standards foisted upon a talented thespian who nonetheless does not fit the mold of the well-heeled white Parisian who is typically granted access to such a program. Refusing to be a mere observer, Diop makes her presence felt in a series of penetrating interviews in which her questions and observations are left uncut. What results is an uncommonly insightful portrait of a young man gradually awakening—often in real-time—to the conditions of his own oppression.

Directed by Alice Diop
France 2011, DCP, color, 64 min. French with English subtitles



Alice Diop DANTON'S DEATH



Alice Diop *SAINT OMER*

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS

ALICE DIOP IN PERSON

monday april 10 at 7pm

SAINT OMER

Clad in a brown sweater that dissolves her into the drab wooden architecture of the courtroom, Laurence Coly (Guslagie Malanda) takes the stand in Diop's first fiction film. Based on Fabienne Kabou, a woman who went to trial in 2016 for the drowning of her baby daughter, Laurence is a character caught in the crosshairs of the same cultural, bureaucratic and racial obstacles that plague the subjects throughout the filmmaker's body of work. Here, what's often unspoken or implicit in Diop's prior films is made concrete and verbal through the patient dramatic coverage of three lengthy trials attended by a French-Senegalese novelist and expectant mother, Rama (Kayije Kagame). Restricting her focus largely to one room and shooting in a confrontational, uninflected style, Diop wrings powerful drama out of the merciless gazes and neutered language of the courtroom, all of which serve to exoticize and delegitimize the testimony of the seemingly inscrutable Laurence. But what might at first seem like a coldly objective recreation of a trial evolves gradually into an intensely emotional and intermittently lyrical study of a woman shaken to her core by her identification with Laurence's words, and the implications of them on her own cultural heritage and intellectual future.

Directed by Alice Diop. With Kayije Kagame, Guslagie Malanda, Robert Cantarella
France 2022, DCP, color, 122 min. French with English subtitles

THE MCMILLAN-STEWART FELLOWSHIP: KIVU RUHORAHOZA

MARCH 31 – APRIL 7

Kivu Ruhorahoza is one of the most important filmmakers of the contemporary generation of African filmmakers and, arguably, the single most significant director in the history of Rwandan cinema. He partakes of an African cinema that is in a process of profound renewal, one that is no longer that of the founding fathers and mothers, but a twenty-first century cinema that is at once confidently globalized and seeks to bring out the specificities of an African experience as well as foreground the possibilities and indispensability of African readings of the contemporary world. Indeed, the richness of his cinematic discourse entails being able to say something about Africa, affirming the right to say something about the world as viewed from Africa, as well as being able to say something about the people who elect to say something about Africa and the world.

This desire to "speak" the world through cinema, and the place of Africa within it, is partly underwritten by the fact that, like most African filmmakers, he was born to find the screens of his country occupied by commercial cinemas from around the world and, thus, soaked in the cinemas of Hollywood, Bollywood, Hong Kong and Europe. Ruhorahoza was twelve years old when what is arguably the last great trauma on human conscience at the twilight of the twentieth century took place in Rwanda, his country, the Genocide of the Tutsi, a grand narrative of our times that profoundly and surreptitiously informs, resonates and echoes throughout his entire body of work.

As an international multi-award-winning filmmaker and artist, Ruhorahoza has, to date, directed eleven short and feature films that have screened globally at prestigious festivals including FESPACO, Sundance, Berlinale, IDFA, Tribeca and Rotterdam, among many others, while his installations have been featured at the Tate, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Institute for Contemporary Art in London, among others.

The eclectic cinema of Kivu Ruhorahoza is a cinema of questioning, one that uses interrogation along with critical and vulnerable self-inscription to blaze its own trail, in the hope of pointing to rays of light in the depth of darkness. As the title of his first film announces, this is a "cinema of grey matter," that of a distinct cinematic voice that will be heard in the years and decades to come. — *Aboubakar Sonogo, Carleton University*

The Film Study Center and Harvard Film Archive welcome Kivu Ruhorahoza as the 2022-23 McMillan-Stewart Fellow in Distinguished Filmmaking. This year, with additional support from the McMillan-Stewart Foundation, the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, and the Division of Arts & Humanities, Ruhorahoza will be in residence at the FSC and the Hutchins Center for the entire spring semester and will be in person at the HFA to screen and discuss his phenomenal body of work.

Film descriptions by Aboubakar Sonogo.

Special thanks: Joana Pimenta, Julie Mallozzi, Cozette Russell—Film Study Center, Harvard; and the McMillan-Stewart Advisory Committee.

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS

KIVU RUHORAHOZA IN CONVERSATION WITH ABOUBAKAR SONOGO

friday march 31 at 7pm

FATHER'S DAY

In his latest film, set in Rwanda, in a COVID-19 context of confinement which, almost by necessity, invites an inward-looking gaze, Kivu Ruhorahoza takes us on an exploration of masculinity through one of its most institutionalized forms: fatherhood. In the film, he figures Rwandan societal debates around the interrogation of fatherhood in a post-genocidal context, one in which the hands that held the machetes and struck, the voices that aided and abetted, the gestures that betrayed and denounced were primarily those of men. This crisis of confidence in masculinity leads the director to place hopes for the future of the social polity squarely in the hands of women and children. Through three parallel stories of failed masculin-



Kivu Ruhorahoza *FATHER'S DAY*



Kivu Ruhorahoza *GREY MATTER*

ity (failure to provide, to assume responsibility, to grieve properly, and the failing of humanity itself by a *génocidaire*), it falls on wives and daughters to potentially fork the path ahead, to create a new culture of conviviality by helping heal the deep wounds of the psyche engendered by male infamy.

Directed by Kivu Ruhorahoza. With Médiatrice Kayitesi, Aline Amike, Yves Kijyana
Rwanda 2022, DCP, color, 111 min. Kinyarwanda with English subtitles

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS KIVU RUHORAHOZA IN PERSON

monday april 3 at 7pm

GREY MATTER MATIÈRE GRISE

Ruhorahoza's first feature is akin to a manifesto film in its announcement of several important axes of his cinema, including the ghost of the genocide and reflexivity about and interrogation of the means, stakes, meaning and political economy of cinematic representation. In it, Kivu Ruhorahoza asks the Adornian question: can and should we create after genocide, in a context of national and continental trauma, in the omnipresence of the memory of an open-air genocide? Can and should art exist after genocide? If so, under what conditions? How do we repair trauma after 1994, even of those who were not physically present during its unfortunate unfolding?

The film also offers one of the most cardinal formal propositions of his work: a predilection for a segmentation of his films in parallel structures (often three). Part one focuses on a filmmaker struggling to obtain funding and equipment to make a film in Rwanda after the genocide. Part two centers around a madman who may have been one of the perpetrators of the genocide or who reverse psychologically plays the role of the perpetrator in order to cope with the resulting trauma. Part three is devoted to two orphans of the genocide, a brother and

sister whose parents were tortured, murdered and their corpses burnt. Unable to live in the present, the brother finds refuge in wearing a biker helmet, constantly reliving the trauma of his parents' demise.

One of the refreshing dimensions of Ruhorahoza's work is that he does not take the work or means of representation for granted. He seeks to effect a profound reflection upon their various dimensions, such as the question of the status of the real, the role of the imaginary, the function of trauma, representational politics, ethics, economics, philosophies, justice. This reflexivity extends beyond the Rwandan post-genocidal context and embraces the very political economy of African cinema, and, indeed, of all cinema as such. What price to pay for a genuinely auteurist cinema? For creative independence in general?

Directed by Kivu Ruhorahoza. With Ramadhan Bizimana, Tamim Hakizimana, Kennedy Jones Mazimpaka
Rwanda 2011, DCP, color, 110 min. Kinyarwanda and French with English subtitles

INTRODUCTION BY KIVU RUHORAHOZA

friday april 7 at 7pm

EUROPA, "BASED ON A TRUE STORY"

With his penultimate film, and indeed the logical outcome of the previous two films, Kivu Ruhorahoza now turns to reverse ethnography, by becoming a Rwandan/African cine-ethnographer in contemporary Europe. Britain was Europe's most powerful country in the Age of Empire but is currently suffering from a prolonged "postcolonial melancholia" (Gilroy), unable to confront and "work through" its inevitable decline (as is the fate of all empires), and using African and other migrants and asylum seekers as scapegoats deliberately left to rot in dehumanizing bureaucratic machines. The director engages in what may be termed "cine-care" by rendering this situation through the fictional story of a love trian-

gle between a white British couple and a Nigerian asylum seeker and setting it against the backdrop of Brexit anti-immigrant passions and debates. He does so by deploying the fictional and essayistic modes of representation in tandem, rendering, in the process, homage to Chris Marker in *Sans Soleil* (1983), Ousmane Sembène in *Black Girl* (1966) and Jean-Pierre Bekolo in *Aristotle's Plot* (1996). One of the most powerful sequences in the film is a nightclub scene in which the film's African hero, in the depths of despair, dances for money, turning on its head the notion in feminist film theory of the male subject as holder of the gaze.

Directed by Kivu Ruhorahoza. With Oris Erhuero, Jennie Lathan, Lisa Moorish
UK/Rwanda/Switzerland 2019, DCP, color, 93 min

INTRODUCTION BY KIVU RUHORAHOZA

friday april 7 at 9pm

THINGS OF THE AIMLESS WANDERER

This film pushes further Ruhorahoza's interests in matters of reflexivity regarding representation, this time focusing on the Western gaze upon Africa. Set in Rwanda, *Things* ruminates on the possibility of a relationship between Africa and the West, haunted by ghosts of the past, ghosts of narratives, trauma, violence and violation, and, indeed of history, dating as far back as the primal scene of the continent's colonial encounter with explorers. In the process, the filmmaker wonders whether, in this overdetermined context of Western discursive production on Africa, the aporia of the missionary/savage impulse is at all surmountable and, indeed, whether the possibility of pushing and potentially improving one's society through the gaze of the Other is even imaginable.

Directed by Kivu Ruhorahoza. With Ramadhan Bizimana, Justin Mullikin, Grace Nikuze
UK/Rwanda 2015, DCP, color, 78 min



Kivu Ruhorahoza *THINGS OF THE AIMLESS WANDERER*

MED HONDO AND THE INDOCILE IMAGE

APRIL 1 – MAY 14

Med Hondo (1935-2019) belongs in the pantheon of the Pan African struggle for emancipation. He will forever reside alongside historians Cheikh Anta Diop and Joseph Ki-Zerbo; political leaders Kwame Nkrumah, Malcolm X, Patrice Lumumba and Thomas Sankara; critical cultural theorists Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon; and filmmaker Ousmane Sembène in their collective drive and battle to produce and secure a new image and place for Africa in the world.

Along with Sembène, Med Hondo was a founding father of African cinema and one of the most talented, versatile and influential filmmakers to emerge from the continent. Hondo was an actor, director, screenwriter, producer and distributor who worked in and mastered a variety of mediums including the theater, radio, television and film. But it was primarily for his two roles as actor and as director that he would be most renowned.



Med Hondo at the Harvard Film Archive in 2000

directed three additional documentaries, including two devoted to the liberation struggle of Western Sahara, entitled *Nous aurons toute la mort pour dormir* (1976-77) and *Polisario, a People in Arms* (1978), as well as *La faim du monde*, which he co-directed with Theo Robichet in 1979. *Sarraounia* (1986), his sumptuous anticolonial epic, which was his only feature in the 1980s, won the Golden Stallion at Africa's most important film festival, the Pan African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO). He directed two features in the 1990s, *Lumière Noire* (1993) and *Watani, A World Without Evil* (1998), followed by his testament film, *Fatima, the Algerian Woman of Dakar* (2004), in which he performs a great work of Pan African(ist) "cine-care" bringing into conversation West and North African cultures. From the year 2004 to his passing, Med Hondo devoted his energies trying to raise funds, cast and direct what he saw as the crowning film of his career, *Toussaint Louverture, The First Among the Blacks*. However, the political economy of both African and world cinemas contributed to making the film impossible.

On March 2, 2019, on the closing day of the 50th anniversary of FESPACO, a festival he helped build, Med Hondo passed away in a hospital in Paris bequeathing an immeasurable cinematic and artistic legacy to generations of spectators to come.

Med Hondo's Politico-Artistic Avant-Gardist Project

Med Hondo belonged in the continuum of first and second generation African intellectuals, politicians and artists and cultural workers for whom decolonization and independence meant more than the trading of places between the former colonizers and the formerly colonized, but rather a radical avant-gardist geopolitical project that would completely overturn the colonial order of things and usher in a new world whose structural and structuring foundations would be radical equality, justice, dignity and liberty for all. For Med Hondo, the cinema had its part to play in the realization of this avant-gardist vision. Similarly, he saw this avant-gardist vision of emancipation as a possibility to emancipate the cinema itself from all forms of dominance including that of certain forms and traditions. Indeed, he famously said once:

I cannot bear to see human beings deprived of their dignity. This is the meaning of my struggle... I have always strived for a cinema of rupture, because I consider that Africans, African civilizations, Black people have their own history, their own destiny, their own expression, and that the cinema they make cannot be the classic cinema made by everybody else, with a beginning, a middle, and an end, kisses, feelings, love, etc. I did not want to swim in that pond. I always told my colleagues to make sure not to imitate the Other cinema. They could of course be inspired by it, by many of its qualities, but not mimic it. For me, the dogma, if any, was to never imitate... (Med Hondo, interview with this author)

Throughout his career, his films and beyond, Med Hondo sought to actualize this vision in his choice of emancipatory themes, a radically and formally innovative approach, an uncompromising and critical bidirectional gaze, and in his contributions to the creation and/or nurturing of important African cinematic institutions such as the Pan African Film Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO), the Pan African Federation of Filmmakers (FEPACI) and the Comité Africain des Cinéastes (CAC).

Thematically for instance, he was one of the first to center the problematic of migration in his cinema by devoting no less than seven films to it and exposing its historically overdetermined nature. He was also one of the first to revisit the African anticolonial struggle and foreground Queen Sarraounia, a female figure, as his protagonist. The radical potential of the film was demonstrated when the French government reportedly put pressure on the Nigerian state to cancel the shooting agreement made with Hondo, forcing him to make the film in the more revolutionary welcoming environment of Thomas Sankara's Burkina Faso. Neocolonialism, neo-slavery,

Born in Ain Beni Matar in Morocco in 1935, Med Hondo attended French and Muslim schools before studying to become a hotel chef and migrating to France in the late 1950s. It was through the theater that he began his artistic practice, first in Marseille and then in Paris where he took courses with the late Francoise Rosay, a famous French actress and a close acquaintance of Lee Strasberg and Elia Kazan, who sought to convince her to create an Actors' Studio in Paris.

The theater presented Med Hondo with both aporia and possibilities, including opening up an illustrious acting career. While he played the European classics (Molière, Shakespeare, Racine, etc.) he soon realized that the theater lacked meaningful roles for Black actors, which led him to join forces with other African and Afro-Caribbean actors in Paris to found their own theater groups—Shango, and then Griots-Shango—and adapt plays by such playwrights as Aimé Césaire, Amiri Baraka, René Depestre, Guy Menga and Daniel Boukman among others.

It was thus the theater that landed him roles in radio, television and cinema. In the latter, he played parts in films by such directors as John Huston, Jean-Luc Godard, Roberto Enrico and Costa-Gavras, among others. To many people around the world, however, in particular in France, and across the Francophone world, it was his voice that nurtured the cinephilic upbringing of generations of spectators, as he dubbed major African American actors in Hollywood including Muhammad Ali, Sidney Poitier, Eddie Murphy, Morgan Freeman, Denzel Washington and many others. Finally, it was also acting that paved the way for, enabled and sustained his independence as a film director, allowing him to craft and nurture a unique and unprecedented cinematic "voice."

With a directorial career spanning six decades, Med Hondo directed thirteen films, including three shorts, his inaugural *Ballade aux sources* (1965) and *Roi de corde: partout peut-être ou nulle part comme convenu* (1969), with which he tried his hands at directing, and *Mes voisins* (1971), his response to Louis Malle's *Calcutta* (1969). It took his feature films to allow him to make an indelible mark on the map of cinema in Africa and across the world. His first masterpiece, *Soleil O* (1970), was selected at Cannes Critics' Week and won the Golden Leopard at Locarno the same year. *Les Bicots-Nègres, vos voisins* (1974), his second feature, secured his place in the pantheon of African cinema with the Golden Tanit at Carthage in 1974. *West Indies, the Fugitive Slaves of Liberty* (1979) consecrated his absolute mastery of film form. In the seventies—his most prolific decade—he



Med Hondo SOLEIL O

Pan Africanism and Black internationalism are centrally featured through Hondo's work, and prominently so in *Soleil O*, *Mes voisins*, *Les Bicots-Nègres*, *West Indies*, *Sarraounia* and *Fatima, the Algerian Woman of Dakar*. Similarly, the director put many of his films under the gentle protective gaze of important radical figures in the African, Afrodiasporic and world revolutionary movement, from Lumumba and Malcolm X to Che Guevara and Ben Barka (*Soleil O*), Karl Marx (*Les Bicots-Nègres*, *vos voisins*) and, analytically speaking, Marxist theory throughout most of his films), Frantz Fanon and Cheikh Anta Diop (*Fatima, the Algerian Woman of Dakar*), etc.

Yet Med Hondo's thematic radicalism is far from self-indulgent. It is structured by a loving yet severely critical bidirectional gaze whereby Western racial capitalism, colonialism and neocolonialism are as equally flagellated as complicit African and Afrodiasporic elites, who are seen as conspirators in confiscating the emancipatory potential of their peoples. In that sense, Hondo very much embodies the figure of the cineaste as intellectual, so defined by Michel Foucault in the following terms: "What is an intellectual but the one who works so that others do not have such a clear conscience?"

The avant-garde status of Med Hondo's films is best understood through the concept of the *indocile image*. Med Hondo's *indocile image* is premised on an interrogation of various forms of dominance including the political, the economic and the cultural, all of which have a purchase on the cinematic. It is an image that rests on the historical, holds emancipation as its horizon, questions and interrogates cinematic forms, practices and modes as partaking in ways and means of engaging with the political and foregrounds a specific experience as a model human experience, that of African and Afrodiasporic subjectivity. The *indocile image* is arguably a non-indulgent image in that it is both premised on and gives prominence to the concept of critique—of self and alterity, of self as other, and indeed other as self. It posits the repudiation of the desire to separate art from life, to confine it to the generation and multiplication of pleasures in the world. Instead, it asks that we expect and demand more from cinema—that it intervenes and participates in transforming the world.

To actualize this vision, Med Hondo deploys a plethora of avant-gardist aesthetic strategies including figuration, direct address, demythification, distanciation, spectator-activation (the production of the citizen-spectator), the articulation of the triad of historical processes, historical consciousness and historical transformation, the adoption of rejected forms (the pedagogic, the didactic) and the creation of new ones (the provisional image), thematization over narrativization, interruption over transparently flowing continuity, the essayistic, the foregrounding of orature, minimalism, non-diegetic characters, etc. Moreover, Med Hondo's avant-garde cinema is formally agnostic in that it considers every available formal device, genre, mode, filmic and nonfilmic, fictional and nonfictional material open to use as long as they serve the film's project. In other words, his is an irreverential deployment of film form.

A Cinephile's Cinema?

At once sober and exuberant, mixing pure and spectacular virtuosity with surprising and sometimes minimalist restraint, Hondo's is a cinephile's cinema, not of the navel-gazing and thumb-sucking kind that rushes to the first row of the theater to absorb the first rays of reflected projector light in their spectatorial bodies, but rather a cinephilia premised on the inseparability of the aesthetic and the political. Humorous, caustic, thought-provoking, historically conscious, uncompromising yet profoundly empathetic and restlessly innovative in their mise en scène, montage, sound design and narrativization, the indocile films of Med Hondo invite us to take our destinies in our own hands and forge a world in our own image. — Aboubakar Sanogo, Carleton University



Med Hondo *WEST INDIES*

In collaboration with Ciné-Archives in Paris, the Harvard Film Archive—which holds many prints of Hondo's films—oversaw the digital restoration of *West Indies* and *Sarraounia*. These screenings will be their US premieres, and on this important occasion we welcome Hondo scholar Aboubakar Sanogo, Ciné-Archives archivist Anabelle Aventurin and Mahen Bonetti, Founder and Executive Director of the African Film Festival, to add their invaluable insights into these essential, powerful films and their fascinating filmmaker.

Film descriptions by Aboubakar Sanogo.

Special Thanks: Film Study Center, Harvard; and the McMillan-Stewart Foundation.



INTRODUCTION BY ABOUBAKAR SANOGO

saturday april 1 at 7pm

friday april 14 at 9pm — without intro

SOLEIL O

Soleil O is Med Hondo's inaugural feature masterpiece, which earned him the Golden Leopard at the Locarno International Film Festival in 1970, and instantly secured his place as one of the giants of African and world cinema. A loosely constructed narrative of the travails of an accountant confidently arriving in Paris to pursue his dreams, the film meticulously uncovers the challenges he faces including racial, housing and employment discrimination along with sexual objectification. For Med Hondo, filming the migrant condition entails going beyond consequences and analyzing (using caustic humor and imagination) causalities—which include colonialism, the structures of capitalism and the implications of neocolonialism—in order to effect change. *Soleil O* remains as acute, timely and relevant in the 21st century as it was at the time of its release five decades ago.



Med Hondo *SOLEIL O*

The film announces the arrival of a maverick director intent on taking on the very form of the medium. He makes a virtuoso use of digression and "unmotivated" non-diegetic inserts as part of his deployment and celebration of orature as an inexhaustible reservoir and resource for cinematic renewal and

experimentation, "condensatory" and abstractive communicative symbolism, cinema vérité, and Eisensteinian montage, among other formal strategies. This is a film that immediately partakes in the modernist pantheon of the cinema.

Soleil O was also the inaugural restoration of the then-newly launched African Film Heritage Project (AFHP), a partnership project between the Pan African Federation of Filmmakers (FEPACI) (of which Med Hondo was an eminent member), Martin Scorsese's The Film Foundation, and UNESCO to restore fifty African films of historical, cultural and artistic significance.

Restored by Cineteca di Bologna at L'Immagine Ritrovata laboratory in collaboration with Med Hondo. Restoration was funded by the Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation and The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project.

Directed by Med Hondo. With Robert Liensol, Théo Légitimus, Ambroise M'Bia
Mauritania/France 1967, DCP, b/w, 98 min. French and Arabic with English subtitles

PRESENTATION BY ANNABELLE AVENTURIN

sunday april 2 at 3pm

BALLADE AUX SOURCES

Ballade aux sources is both Med Hondo's first film and his least known. Hondo seldom mentioned it, and, when he did, often dismissed it as a mere sketch, a training ground to demonstrate to himself that he had the ability to make a film. Out of circulation for decades (it is not clear whether it was ever screened theatrically), it was recently found in the garage of his codirector, French journalist, photographer and archaeologist Bernard Nantet.

Shot over three months in 1965 (Hondo was thirty years old) during a trip to North Africa organized by Italian journalist and anthropologist Attilio Gaudio, the film's title evokes Aimé Césaire's *Négritude* classic *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* / *Notebook of a Return to the Homeland*. Directing it reportedly involved twenty reels of reversal film shot with a 16mm Beaulieu camera and two reels of magnetic sound. Although their sound equipment was stolen during the trip, they recorded, upon their return, a voiceover text written by poet Audre Lorde and spoken by Med Hondo himself over music by the late and great Guinean guitarist musician Kante Facelli's classic song "Kadia Blues." Unfortunately, the sound is currently in a poor state of preservation and efforts are being made by Cine-Archives to recover it and remarry it to the image track.

Opening with a shot of Med Hondo looking through a barred fence (as though a prisoner casting an alienated gaze at his surroundings) at life unfolding in the Parisian megalopolis (neon lights, passengers coming out of the metro, mannequins, street signs), the camera ends up focusing on the sky and cuts away to his boat trip to Africa, where he visits Algeria, Tunisia—including the Kerkennah archipelago and the island of Djerba—among other places. During his various stops, he rediscovers eclectic spaces, including deserts, cities and ruins from antiquity and foregrounds architectural traces of the African continent's multiple, complex and irreducible histories and identities, which include Berber, Arab, ancient Roman, Christian, Jewish and Islamic cultures.

The film establishes many of Med Hondo's thematic concerns: the relationships between Africa and Europe; the dialectics of alienation and belonging; the quest for and interrogation of identity (self and



Med Hondo BALLADE AUX SOURCES

collective identities, the pluralities and contradictory nature of identity, the drive to bring them together, in productive conversation); cinema and of Africa.

Filmmaker, programmer and archivist Annabelle Aventurin is responsible for the preservation and distribution of Med Hondo's archives at Ciné-Archives in Paris. In 2021 she coordinated, with the Harvard Film Archive, the restoration of West Indies and Sarraounia. Before the screening, she will describe the different stages of conservation of the sound and image, as well as ongoing work on the only remaining black-and-white 16mm copy of the film.

Directed by Med Hondo and Bernard Nantet
Mauritania 1965, digital video, b/w, 25 min. French with English subtitles

INTRODUCTION BY MAHEN BONETTI

sunday april 2 at 7pm

saturday april 8 at 9pm – without intro

SARRAOUNIA

Sarraounia is a very rare species of film in the history African cinema. Indeed, although numerous ideas and projects existed that sought to celebrate African resistance to European colonial conquest, the large dependence of the political economy of African cinema on its former colonizers has for the most part made this aspiration nearly impossible for most. Med Hondo was one of the very few filmmakers who succeeded in carrying this project through, at great personal, health and financial cost. The film owes much of its existence to the late Captain Thomas Sankara, former Head of State of Burkina Faso and a committed cinephile, who, upon learning of Hondo's difficulties in Niger, offered to let him shoot the film in the Western region of Burkina Faso and

put technicians, actors, and indeed the Burkinabe army at his disposal.

By adapting Abdoulaye Mamani's eponymous book, Med Hondo chose to make an epic of one page of the great encyclopedia of African resistance against colonialism. Following the notorious 1884-85 Berlin conference, European countries engaged in a collective and systematic assault on the African continent in order to take over its lands and resources, lord over the lives of its inhabitants, and impose their culture and modes of thought, thereby inaugurating the Age of Catastrophe. Headed for Lake Chad in Central Africa, the infamous and bloodthirsty Voulet-Chanoine French military expedition, seeking to enact a French version of the British Cape-to-Cairo imperial fantasy, meets on its path the indomitable and incomparable strategist Queen Sarraounia of the Azna, who bravely resists their incursion.

Sarraounia is one of the few films to not only meticulously explore the processes involved in organizing anticolonial resistance but also to chronicle the unspeakably gory violence of colonial conquest. Shot in glorious Techniscope, with luxuriant colors and exquisitely staged action and battle scenes across multiple planes reminiscent of a Western, the film embodies and takes to their highest level many elements of Med Hondo's style—deploying nonfictional modes in fiction, animation in live action, innovative use of voiceover and deemphasis of identificatory processes. This rare jewel of a film also contributed to the reinsertion of Queen Sarraounia in African history books, consolidating Med Hondo's status as a filmmaker-historian.

Directed by Med Hondo. With Aï Keïta, Jean-Roger Milo, Féodor Atkine
Burkina Faso/Mauritania/France 1986, DCP, color, 120 min. Dyula, Peul and French with English subtitles

saturday april 8 at 7pm

monday may 8 at 7pm

BLACK LIGHT LUMIÈRE NOIRE

Lumière Noire is Med Hondo's third cinematic adaptation of preexisting work. Coming in the wake of Daniel Boukman's play *Les Négriers*, which became *West Indies*, and Abdoulaye Mamani's *Sarraounia*, eponymously adapted, *Lumière Noire* is the director's first adaptation of a work by a French writer, Didier Daeninckx, whose novel carried the same title.



Med Hondo SARRAOUNIA

The film tells the story of a police blunder at a road-block near Charles de Gaulle airport following a terrorist alert. A motorist is killed in the process. His friend, an aircraft engineer, does not believe the police account of the incident. The only way for him to uncover the truth is to find an eyewitness to the killing—a young Malian held in a hotel at the airport and waiting to be deported along with one hundred other migrants from the same country. The aircraft engineer's quest leads him all the way to Bamako and indeed the Malian countryside.

In this film, unlike any of his other films, Med Hondo experiments with the crime thriller—featuring in the process an homage to Orson Welles' mythic opening sequence in *Touch of Evil*—to explore the reality of the deportation of African migrants back to their countries of origin. The director faced endless instances of “preventive censorship” (his term) in the refusal of permits to shoot at Charles de Gaulle airport and surrounding hotels. In pure guerilla filmmaking tradition, the director and his crew illegally shot some of the scenes at the Paris airport, in part by disguising themselves as airport workers. Only the direct intervention of the French President François Mitterand himself helped the situation.

With *Lumière Noire*, Hondo explores the ways in which the supposedly post-imperial state turns on its own citizens and devours them in situations of crisis/emergency, where, as aptly put in the film's one-liner, “democracy stops where reason of the State begins.” Just as it flouted laws in the colonies, so it will in its own territory if it perceives itself to be in danger. Indeed, the film is a sophisticated figuration of the ways in which the State (Ministry of the interior) along with its repressive and ideological apparatuses (the police and the press, respectively) are deployed against the citizen-subject who is turned into interior/domestic Other. The film becomes a warning shot fired at the complacency of so-called democracies which stand by as violence is deployed by their states against constructed and supposedly remote Others, in willful ignorance of the boomerang effect of such violence. Indeed, it is almost a reactualization of Hannah Arendt's argument on totalitarianism as partaking of the historical continuum between antisemitism and imperialism/colonialism.

Upon the release of *Lumière Noire*, the legendary French film magazine *Positif* wrote the following: “From time to time one sees on Parisian screens unusual meteors. This is one such film.”

Directed by Med Hondo. With Patrick Poivey, Inês de Medeiros, Gilles Ségol
France 1994, 35mm, color, 104 min. French with English subtitles

friday april 14 at 7pm – DCP

saturday april 15 at 9pm – 35mm

WEST INDIES

By all measures one of Med Hondo's lasting masterpieces, *West Indies* is a visually and aurally stunning musical appropriately set on a giant slave ship symbolizing the relationship between Africa, Europe and the Caribbean. Placing the ship in an abandoned Citroën factory, Hondo highlights the foundational role of the so-called triangular Atlantic slave trade in the advent of the Industrial Revolution, the emergence and rise to power of the bourgeoisie, massive urbanization, the appearance of modernity and the global spread of capitalism. Hondo explores parallels, indeed, an unbroken historical con-



Med Hondo *LUMIÈRE NOIRE*

tinuum between the forced migration of the Atlantic slave trade and the more recent migration of Afro-Caribbean subjects to former colonial metropolises.

In this explosive demonstration of virtuosity, Hondo deftly takes advantage of the staging, framing and montage possibilities of filming in one location and in widescreen format to tell four centuries of history through genial tracking shots—well-crafted with exquisite and geometrically precise high-angle, horizontal and vertical long takes—as well as changes in temporality through camera movement, lush colors and poignant lyrics and choreographies that invite the spectator to join in the struggle to transform the world. The film ends with a dizzying 360-degree rotating shot celebrating revolt and marking the demise of the ship and the entire system it represents, arguably offering one of the most vertiginous closing sequences in film history.

With *West Indies*, Med Hondo confirms his status as one of the incontrovertible masters of cinema. Sergei Eisenstein, who directed *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), would have been proud to see his experiment taken to a much higher, further and more complex level.

Directed by Med Hondo. With Robert Liensol, Roland Bertin, Hélène Vincent
France/Algeria/Mauritania 1979, 35mm/DCP, color, 113 min. French with English subtitles

saturday april 15 at 7pm

WATANI WATANI, UN MONDE SANS MAL

Watani is one of Med Hondo's least discussed films, but arguably, one of his most powerful. Shot in black and white on a shoestring budget, in a minimalist mode and with winks toward silent cinema and hip hop culture, *Watani* was inspired by news of daily

humiliation of migrants and a general context of fear.

The film contrasts the lives of two characters who lose their job on the same day: Patrick Clement, a married bank clerk with two daughters and a wife consigned to a wheelchair following a terrorist attack and Mamadou Sylla, an African immigrant, also a father of two, who is a garbage collector. While the latter seeks employment in vain (in a situation reminiscent of *Soleil O*), the former drifts slowly into the hands of extremist rightwing groups who attack and kill Black and Arab migrants in the dark of the night. Symbolically rich, the film has important resonances with longer histories of France's relationship to its former colonies, namely the famous October 17, 1961 massacre of Algerian migrants in Paris directed by the then Police Chief himself in reprisal against the FLN's independence struggle.

In this film, Med Hondo de-emphasizes speech and stresses the cine-discursive potential of the articulation of sound and image tracks, making this a genuine montage film, and leaving it up to the spectator to make the necessary connections. With beautiful tracking shots and music often carrying the filmmaker's point of view, *Watani* also includes exquisite Chaplin-esque and Fellini-esque pantomime scenes. It is Hondo's first experiment with the medium of video. In a move to restore hope in the possibility of a world of transracial conviviality, he uses color only at the beginning and at the end of the film—in the post-credit scene—constituting, in the process, the migrant experience as universal experience.

Directed by Med Hondo. With Patrick Poivey, Coumba Awa Tall, Mboup Massyla
France 1998, 35mm, color, 78 min. French with English subtitles

sunday april 16 at 7pm

LES BICOTS-NÈGRES, VOS VOISINS

Med Hondo's second feature film was arguably considered by many as a UFO, an Unassimilable Filmic Object. Indeed, although the film won the Golden Tanit at the Carthage Film Festival in 1974, it acquired English subtitles only in... 2019. Here the maverick director offers one of his boldest cinematic experiments yet, in the form of a long essay with multiple endings and durations (one version is three hours long), and eight seemingly loosely related sequences—in which he trades dramatic unity for organic unity between filmmaker and subjects—involving a detour through a long opening sequence, the invocation of the memory of colonialism and per-



Med Hondo *LES BICOTS-NÈGRES, VOS VOISINS*



Med Hondo *WATANI*

verted independence, and a subjunctive image re-staging the neocolonial pact in an imaginary garden party sequence. In effect, the film is a masterclass on neocolonialism (regrettably still pertinent) and a brilliant analysis of the repressive postcolonial state apparatus—before examining the experiences and living conditions of migrants, their affective miseries, and their coming into consciousness and rise against the system—which concludes with a beautiful homage to African cinema as a desirable cinema that has found its place alongside those who struggle.

One of the most memorable cinephilic moments of the film is its twenty-one-minute opening sequence, meditating on both the Bazinian question “What is cinema?” and the 1970s theory question of the relationship between cinema and ideology. As Med Hondo put it well himself: “I think that it is fundamentally impossible for any African filmmaker, and, indeed for any Third World filmmaker to make films without asking themselves questions about the cinema. Mine were: *What kind of film should I make? For whom? What is cinema?* I decided to raise and address these questions directly on film, to put my theory into practice.”

Directed by Med Hondo. With Armand Abplanalp, Jean Berger, Claude Debord
Mauritania/France 1974, 35mm, color, 100 min. French and Arabic with English subtitles

monday april 24 at 7pm

FATIMA, THE ALGERIAN WOMAN OF DAKAR *FATIMA, L'ALGÉRIENNE DE DAKAR*

In his adaptation of a short story by the late Tahar Cheriaa, founder of the Carthage Film Festival in 1966, Med Hondo explores the legacies of decolonization. A testimony to the director's profound investment in the historical, the film tells the story of Fatima, an Algerian woman who is raped during her country's liberation war in 1957 by Souleymane Fall, a young Senegalese officer heading a column of the occupying French colonial army. A few years later after his return to Senegal, Souleymane is summoned

by his father and ordered to go back to Algeria and repair the harm he caused Fatima, who, meanwhile has been the object of unspeakable racism for carrying a Black son. Souleymane, Fatima and their son Abdelkader ultimately return to Senegal to start a new life potentially full of promise.

As a brilliant hymn to the Pan-African project and a beautiful homage to the figure of Frantz Fanon, Fatima could also be looked at in terms of Med Hondo's attempt at a political cinema aimed at creating what Deleuze refers to as a “people to come” (*un peuple à venir*). By cinematically bringing Fatima, the Algerian woman, to Dakar, Med Hondo does in effect partake in literally forging a Pan-African people, a people that would emerge from the bringing together of the cultures of Africa North and South of the Sahara, for the creation of a new Africa. Such is Med Hondo's ultimate message in what turned out to be his testament film.

Directed by Med Hondo. With Aboubacar Sadikh Ba, Amel Djemel, Thierno Ndiaye
Mauritania/Tunisia/France/Senegal 2004, 35mm, color, 89 min. French, Arabic and Wolof with English subtitles

Preceded by

MES VOISINS

Med Hondo conceived his fourth film as a response by a “third-worlder of cinema” (Marker) to Louis Malle's *Calcutta* (1969), which he considered miserabilist. It is at once an individual filmic object and a part of a longer magnum opus entitled *Les Bicots-Nègres, vos voisins*, completed a few years later. As a standalone film, it is very well structured in several parts, made of an interview, a sung montage sequence of observational scenes about the slum dwelling conditions of primarily migrant African workers and long sequences where migrants collectively air their grievances about their untenable living conditions and seek to understand and articulate them in relation to the broader open-air carceral system that holds and maintains them in such conditions, concluding with an animation photomontage which engages in the explanatory paradigm by exposing what Marx refers to as “the hidden foundation” of their predicament.

In many ways, *Mes voisins* is a child of the direct cinema/cinema vérité debates of the late 1950s and early 1960s, which foregrounded the use of sync sound and lightweight cameras to represent the real. The possibility to approach the migrants and capture their testimonies was predicated on that technology and that method. In that regard, it is ironic that Hondo who was a virulent critic of Jean Rouch very much embodied some of his techniques (certainly if we refer to *Chronique d'un été*.) The concept of the interactive camera, the foregrounding of the interview, and the notion that observation alone

is not enough, that the mise en scène of speech must also be put at the center of the documentary *dispositif*, are all significant here.

Mes voisins also resonates with an older history of documentary, that of the 1930s Griersonian tradition, which canvasses the working and living conditions of the working class. But in this film, while the context of capitalism remains, its articulation to the imperial, the colonial and the racial highlights its singularity, producing a new context.

Directed by Med Hondo
France 1971, DCP, b/w, 35 min. French with English subtitles

sunday may 14 at 7pm

POLISARIO, A PEOPLE IN ARMS *POLISARIO, UN PEUPLE EN ARMES*

This made-for-TV documentary coproduced with Algerian television is Med Hondo's second film devoted to his support for the Saharawi people's right to self-determination. Shot in one of the rare former Spanish colonies in Africa, the film chronicles one of the final battles before the signing of a ceasefire between Morocco and the Polisario. Relying more on images than words, the film foregrounds actual battle scenes in which the crew found itself, in this context of armed struggle of a people sacrificed to the altar of geopolitical interests.

Directed by Med Hondo
France/Mauritania 1978, 16mm, color, 90 min. French with English subtitles



Med Hondo *POLISARIO*

STILL LIFE WITH HONG SANGSOO

APRIL 21 – MAY 14

With this opportunity to watch the last seven films of Hong Sangsoo, the Harvard Film Archive offers us the possibility of three distinct experiences.

The first is that of discovering the films for the first time: the impression of a new sensation, the emotion of a door that opens and invites you in. I like to think of Hong's oeuvre as a home and each film a different room in which we are welcomed to spend time watching and listening to a story unfold with the playful uncertainty we experience when we enter an unfamiliar home.



Hong Sangsoo *IN FRONT OF YOUR FACE*

But, before going into the museum, let me share with you an unusual *cinophile* echo. By watching, rewatching and recombining Hong's films, I could suddenly hear the pulse of a filmmaker he is usually not associated with: Orson Welles. In a conversation between Welles and Peter Bogdanovich, there is a moment when the younger cinophile asks the master why he used an 18.5mm lens in *Citizen Kane*. Welles answers: "Because no one else was using it." Director Hong might respond similarly about his singular working method, for he seems to want to try the option that most people would neglect or leave out. In choosing what others do not, he finds something that is out of his control, something unformed, new, not a determined style, something whose meaning is yet unclear.

The most prominent example of this attitude is his use of the zoom to create a purely optical movement. In order not to interrupt the flow of the acting and to accompany the development of the action, he instead chooses to either zoom in or zoom out, a decision that everyone else would have rejected for being too intrusive, too artificial. Finally, after at least ten films, it has been accepted, naturalized, even celebrated as a sign of authorship, of style. Yet now, in his last two films, he is not zooming anymore.

Another of Hong's provocations is his choice of locations. He chooses places that might pass as too ordinary, flat, narrow, nondescript or even ugly. But, then, what is beauty? Hong seems to avoid space-prejudice in favor of proximity and the curious warmth of the crooked quotidian. This resistance against the standardization of image and sound in cinema is even empowered by his choice of shooting with the cameras he has available—usually low-resolution—and recording his score with... maybe his phone? Most filmmakers would avoid all of these conditions since they might prevent them from making films or showing them internationally. But Hong's decision to choose counter to the tradition, selecting even that option different from what contemporary *auteur* cinema would take, seems to be making his project possible. Hong moves forward by going against, avoiding looking back in a seemingly calm but steady step. And so, he experiments: he blurs his images, saturates the colors, exposes the pixels in his black-and-white cinematography, edits against cause-effect relationships, leaves things unsaid and makes dreams and reality, life and cinema undistinguishable.



Hong Sangsoo *HOTEL BY THE RIVER*



Hong Sangsoo *WALK UP*

The second experience is that of revisiting one or many of the films and coming back to rooms that might look different this time around; previously hidden nooks and drawers now expanding our first encounters. As we watch again, the old becomes new and the anxious search for novelty is put into question.

And lastly, the third experience is that of combining films. Because Hong's recent films were made within such a short period of time, deconstructing the chronology of production provides unexpected resonance, and new shafts of light stream across the different rooms. In creating your own double or triple feature, you can see these works less as a linear path or evolution than a much more complex and ever-changing network. The combinations incite new interactions that may change how we perceive each film, breaking their autonomy, rejecting the hierarchical idea of the masterpiece and introducing the idea that this artist's work is a lifelong and ever-mutating project.

These three experiences resonate with certain concepts attributed to three modernist painters. The experience of watching for the first time relates to Paul Cézanne and his idea of painting as a realization or sensation of the uncertainty of personal experience. The second experience, of rewatching, relates to Giorgio Morandi and his joyful re-encounter of ordinary motifs through repetition and variation. And lastly, the idea of combination relates to Josef Albers' experimentation with color and his awareness of the inherent mutability of our perception and the infinite possibilities of interaction.

In a world of elevator pitches, feedback sessions, high-definition images, Dolby surround sound, high concepts, algorithmic scripts, mood boards, millions of dollars, cynicism and cleverness Hong Sangsoo turns away by going smaller and practicing what Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet call "the luxury of austerity." On a very small budget, he works with only a tiny crew and takes on overlapping roles (he is now doing the writing, directing, editing, cinematography and music of his films). He shoots on a tight schedule of only a dozen days and writes his scripts the morning of the shoot, resourcefully using biographical elements almost to the point of absurdity, with elusive and ambiguous storylines that are not that easy to follow but playfully subvert traditional narrative and any sort of suspense or surprise tricks.

In his recent and enlightening book about Hong Sangsoo's *Tale of Cinema*, New York Film Festival Director Dennis Lim narrates the interaction of the filmmaker with one of Cézanne's paintings of apples Hong experienced as a student at the Art Institute of Chicago. Hong recounts that after standing in front of that painting for a while he understood that there was no need for more; *that was enough*. Last month, I had the opportunity to see

this same painting in a Cézanne exhibit in London. Standing before it, I tried to figure out what Hong saw, what realization or sensation made him feel that that something was enough. I was distracted by the thick layer of yellow paint that dominated the left side of the painting and by how unevenly applied it was. It was more abstract than the usual apple still lifes that were in the other rooms. I thought about how much closer the set of a Hong film is to an artist's studio than to a regular film set. I also thought about how we could abstract space and time in cinema. I thought about the repetition of motifs—the apples, the soju bottles, the tables—the act of painting and shooting once and again the same set of elements, the closeness to those fruits and cloths, the familiarity with those narrow streets and people.

And so I recalled another conversation I had, this time with director Jaime Puertas Castillo: while discussing what could be his next film, he surprised me by revealing the importance of proximity, and a desire to make films in proximity, from what we have around us, close to us, given to us. An unpredictable strength lies there that might be enough, enough to make a film, enough to make sense. How much is enough for making sense? What questions does a film need to ask? Does a film need to resolve them or keep them without closure? How can we restore to images and sounds some of the rich ambiguity this powerful proximity holds within? A sense of mystery, something unsaid, is necessary to keep the films open, to invite us and move forward. Director Hong's films have the (extra)ordinary ability to hold these mysteries effortlessly. We remain on the verge of making sense. We doubt. We might not fully see. Things remain in that moment just before they become evident. But they are there, as things are. And that might be enough. The film ends, and we go out the door.

Here I share some of the questions or mysteries that emerged for me during the watching of these seven films:

1. Which film is actress Kim Min-hee writing at the coffee shop in *Grass*? Why does actress Gong Min-jung go up and down the stairs? And what does actor Ahn Jae-hong see when he contemplates the grass that gives title to the film?
2. Why does reality become so painterly in *Hotel by the River*? How soothing is crying? Why does Hong wait for the cat to leave the frame before cutting to the next scene?
3. Is there a woman escaping in *The Woman Who Ran*? Why does Kim Min-hee come back to the cinema? Is going to the theater to watch a movie effectively a short-term rental that provides those without a home with a temporary roof? (Thank you, filmmaker Gina Telaroli for that note!)
4. Why can't actor Shin Seok-ho hug leading lady Park Mi-so in the scene they are shooting in *Introduction*? How many films are there in this film? How cold is that sea? Is he in love with his friend?
5. Whose film is the film shot by the novelist in *The Novelist's Film*? Why are some of Hong's films in black and white? How can Hong wrap up a film that continuously meanders and detours in such a beautifully classical way?
6. In *In Front of Your Face* a woman is dying. Why is she laughing? Does Lee Hye-yeong want to accept the invitation to star in a film?
7. How many fears is the director in the film—actor Kwon Hae-hyo—coping with in *Walk Up*? Is that building a place of comfort or a trap? What's happening with that car?

These questions have produced in me a sense of closeness to these films. I feel invited to inhabit them. They keep me warm while embracing uncertainty. I relate to them. I feel at home.

So, if I were in Cambridge during this series, I would go watch these films again. As is true for the cinema of Yasujiro Ozu (soon to be seen in a complete HFA retrospective this summer), I think it is important to watch more than one film. Because Hong's project goes beyond any single film. It is a home with many rooms inviting you to spend time within them.

And after the screenings, I would visit the museum that stands just next to the beautiful Carpenter Center where the screenings are taking place and look for Cézanne's painting that hangs there: *Still Life with Commode*. I would stand there looking at those apples for a while, and then I would go home. — *Matías Piñeiro, Donosti, Basque Country - December 18th, 2022*

friday april 21 at 7pm

sunday april 23 at 7pm

WALK UP

Directed by Hong Sangsoo. With Cho Yun-hee, Lee Hye-yeong, Kwon Hae-hyo

South Korea 2022, DCP, b/w, 97 min. Korean with English subtitles

friday april 21 at 9pm

INTRODUCTION INTEURODEOKSYEON

Directed by Hong Sangsoo. With Shin Seok-ho, Park Mi-so, Kim Young-ho

South Korea 2021, DCP, b/w, 66 min. Korean with English subtitles

sunday april 23 at 3pm

sunday may 7 at 3pm

IN FRONT OF YOUR FACE

DANGSIN-FOLGUL-APESAO

Directed by Hong Sangsoo. With Cho Yun-hee, Lee Hye-yeong, Kwon Hae-hyo

South Korea 2021, DCP, color, 85 min. Korean with English subtitles

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Hong Sangsoo *GRASS*



Hong Sangsoo *THE WOMAN WHO RAN*

friday may 5 at 7pm

saturday may 13 at 9pm

THE NOVELIST'S FILM

SO-SEOL-GA-UI YEONG-HWA

Directed by Hong Sangsoo. With Lee Hye-yeong, Kim Min-hee, Seo Young-hwa

South Korea 2022, DCP, b/w, 92 min. Korean with English subtitles

friday may 5 at 9pm

GRASS PUL-IP-DEUL

Directed by Hong Sangsoo. With Kim Min-hee, Kee Joobong, Ahn Jae-hong

South Korea 2018, DCP, b/w, 66 min. Korean with English subtitles

sunday may 7 at 7pm

THE WOMAN WHO RAN DOMANGCHIN YEOJA

Directed by Hong Sangsoo. With Kim Min-hee, Lee Eun-mi, Song Seon-mi

South Korea 2020, DCP, color, 77 min. Korean with English subtitles

saturday may 13 at 7pm

sunday may 14 at 3pm

HOTEL BY THE RIVER GANGBYEON HOTEL

Directed by Hong Sangsoo. With Gi Ju-bong, Kwon Hae-hyo, Kim Min-hee

South Korea 2018, DCP, b/w, 96 min. Korean with English subtitles

Known for singlehandedly putting Iran on the map of international cinema, Abbas Kiarostami's filmmaking style was shaped by a variety of Persian arts, especially poetry. Reframing the world and the relationships between individuals through his creative involvement with actors—often amateurs, often children—and showing a keen eye for the beauty of landscapes, he produced philosophical works that reinvented the genres of documentary and narrative fiction.

Born in 1940, Kiarostami developed a love of painting at a young age, which led him to enroll in Tehran's University of Fine Arts. During the 1960s he was involved in the film and television industry, both as a director of commercials and as a title designer for films. After the founding of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (known as Kanoon), which, as part of its artistic activities, provided funding and facilities for the production of films for or about children, Kiarostami joined the organization and made *The Bread and Alley*, a short film about a boy's fear of a stray dog.

Across three decades of work for Kanoon, Kiarostami refined his style, film by film. The simpler the premise, the more cogent the film: typically, a boy wishes to get from A to B and must overcome obstacles along the way. These didactic plots are underscored by a sense of playfulness, displaying the compositional skill of an accomplished graphic artist, as seen in Kiarostami's finest achievement from this period (and his first feature film), *The Traveler*.

Eventually, Kiarostami broadened his engagement with children and their experiences, exploring their interactions with adults, for instance, as crystallized in *Where is the Friend's House?*. This graceful film, about a boy in search of his classmate's house, not only brought the director fame, but also marked the beginning of his association with Koker, a village in northern Iran. Five years after the production, an earthquake hit the area, leaving 50,000 people dead. Kiarostami took his crew in search of the boy from the first film, but, at a certain point, decided to take one of his famous detours and search for signs of life in the devastated area. In the second part of the trilogy, the majestic *And Life Goes On...*, the director encountered a man preparing to wed despite the human disaster, which became the subject of his third cinematic visit to Koker, *Through the Olive Trees*.

In the mid-1990s, from the Palme d'Or-winning *Taste of Cherry* to the UN-commissioned documentary *ABC Africa*, Kiarostami's films became more somber, their trips bumpier, and the point of focus shifted to the subject of death. Women, long absent in Kiarostami's cinema, were eventually given an unprecedented freedom that their male counterparts lacked. In *Shirin*, 110 actresses from Iranian cinema (plus Juliette Binoche) are filmed in close-up in a screening room, crying at the film they are all watching, but which we never see.

Kiarostami continued to challenge his own ideas about the relations between men and women in *Certified Copy*. Returning to a theme that he had tackled with less success in the semiautobiographical *The Report* (1977), *Certified Copy* avoided certainties in its sensitive response to the shifting identities of a couple, played by Binoche and opera baritone William Shimell. The sense of incompleteness (in both the story and the identities of the characters) is borrowed from *Close-up*.

A moving and richly layered masterpiece, *Close-up* is also a demonstration of the futility of any attempt to draw a clear separating line between documentary and fiction. It tells the story of Hossein Sabzian, an idler and cinephile who claims to be the renowned Iranian director Mohsen Makhmalbaf in order to inveigle himself into the home of an unsuspecting family. He is eventually exposed by a journalist and put on trial for fraud. However, his actions bring him face to face with another renowned filmmaker, Kiarostami, who makes a film about him. Eventually, he meets Makhmalbaf in the flesh. A lie becomes reality, but just how much of this reality remains a lie is unknowable.

Kiarostami always stood outside the crowd, returning to his solitude by venturing into photography, poetry and installation. Yet even these temporary departures from filmmaking contained the marks of Kiarostami's cinematic thinking, involving a further contemplation on the mechanisms of looking that Kiarostami had demonstrated since his early films.

As with many filmmakers who carry within themselves experiences of living and working through political upheavals and personal tragedies, Kiarostami found a balance between pure cynicism and deep humanism in his work, as it continually questioned life and cinema. — Ehsan Khoshbakht

A program of Kiarostami's early work screened this past September.

Descriptions by Brittany Gravely, unless otherwise noted.

friday may 12 at 7pm – DCP

sunday may 21 at 3pm – 35mm

THE WIND WILL CARRY US BAD MA RA KHAHAD BORD

A media engineer from Tehran (Behzad Dorani) arrives in a remote mountain village in Iranian Kurdistan, where he and his three-person camera crew secretly wait for a century-old woman to die so they can film or tape an exotic mourning ritual at her funeral. To do this he has to miss a family funeral of his own, and every time his mobile phone rings the poor reception forces him to drive to a cemetery atop a mountain, where he sometimes converses with a man digging a deep hole for an unspecified telecommunications project. Back in the village, the digger's fiancée milks a cow for the engineer while he flirts with her by quoting an erotic poem that gives the movie its title. Over half the major characters—including the crew, the dying woman, and the digger—are kept mainly or exclusively offscreen, and the dense and highly composed soundtrack often refers to other offscreen elements, peculiarities of Kiarostami's style that solicit the viewer's imaginative participation. What's most impressive about this global newspaper and millennial statement is how much it tells us about our world at the moment—especially regarding the acute differences in perception and behavior between media “experts” and everyone else. Kiarostami contemplates the power adhering to class, gender, age, and education; the film reflects ironically on his own ethical relationship to the poor people he films, and it's arguably his first since



Abbas Kiarostami *THE WIND WILL CARRY US*



Abbas Kiarostami 24 FRAMES

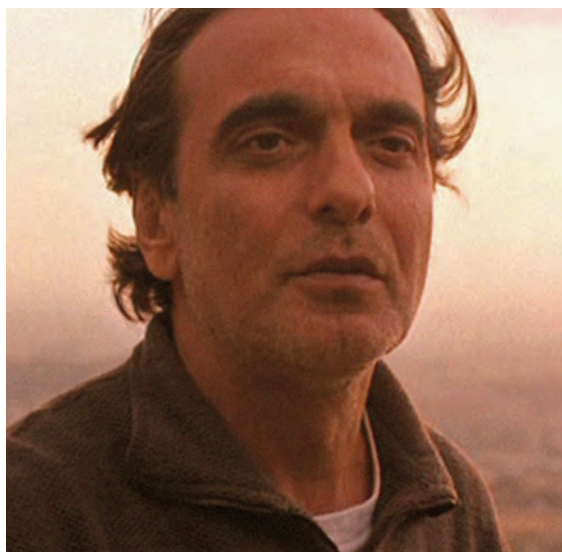
The Report (1977) that tries to deal with the role of women in Iranian society. It's also a gorgeous, Bruegel-esque treatment of landscape and architecture (the village, clinging to a mountainside and marked by declivities and intricate interweavings, is a marvel in itself) and a series of reflections on Persian poetry as well as animal and insect life. You have to become friends with this movie before it opens up, but then its bounty is endless. — Jonathan Rosenbaum

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Behzad Dorani, Noghre Asadi, Roushan Karam Elmi
Iran/France 1999, DCP/35mm, color, 118 min. Persian and Kurdish with English subtitles

monday may 15 at 7pm
FIVE DEDICATED TO OZU

Filmed on the shores of the Caspian Sea, the filmmaker's experimental meditation is as much an ode to Ozu as it is a poetic distillation of Kiarostami's own cinema. Over the course of five discrete segments, the director allows nature—the ultimate non-actor—to reveal the rhythms, “hidden patterns” and myriad micronarratives that emerge for the creative and curious beings who have the patience to watch and wait. Serene, disarming, life-affirming, *Five* produces the sonic and visual equivalents to those precious and mundane tastes of cherry that Kiarostami's cinema encourages all to recognize and savor.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami
Iran/Japan/France 2003, DCP, color, 74 min



Abbas Kiarostami TASTE OF CHERRY

friday may 19 at 7pm
friday may 26 at 9pm
TASTE OF CHERRY TA'M E GUILASS

One of Kiarostami's most celebrated films was also one of his most contentious, and not just with Iranian censors—it blindsided audiences everywhere. The premise is simple, if eccentric: a man drives around searching for someone to bury him after he commits suicide. Badii could ultimately be looking for an accomplice, witness or, perhaps, savior as he circles the existential, bare landscapes surrounded by sand and mountains and machines moving earth. Though apparently it was Kiarostami who was the offscreen passenger or driver during the making of the film, it is the viewer who is offered the position either opposite Badii or the witness to his unusual proposition. The questions accumulate as Badii bargains with each of his passengers—a young Kurdish soldier, an Afghan student of religion and an old taxidermist. Though the film's allegorical richness, its reflective ambiguity, intricate references and compelling, suspenseful structure are enough to compose a profound cinematic experience, Kiarostami was not content with such a perfect enclosure. As the controversial ending thrillingly illustrates, a film like this cannot be contained; it must transform.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Homayoun Ershadi, Abdolrahman Bagheri, Afshin Khorshid Bakhtiari
Iran/France 1997, 35mm, color, 95 min. Persian with English subtitles

friday may 19 at 9pm
ABC AFRICA

Responding to a request from the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development to make a documentary about the Uganda Women's Efforts to Save Orphans, Kiarostami and crew traveled to Kampala with DV cameras in hand to learn about the country's growing orphan population. By the end of the trip, Kiarostami realized they had a film. It was contained in their daily, casual video sketches, which include glimpses into everyday activities and the various ways Ugandans cope with the results of continual war and AIDS. The camera's eye scours homes, streets, marketplaces and hospitals, as well as UWESO meetings, where participants explain how the community-led organization helps empower women through job training and support for the adopted children. Taken with the predominance of joy and resilience despite extreme hardship, Kiarosta-

mi seems in search of the soul of Kampala, and he doesn't hide his unavoidable position as an outsider and voyeur. He and his assistant's constant recording allows the audience to experience moments of startling discovery alongside the filmmakers, such as when they happen upon a shrouded, small body being unceremoniously, yet tenderly, wrapped up and placed on the back of a bicycle for burying.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami
Iran 2001, DCP, color, 83 min. Persian and English with English subtitles

saturday may 20 at 7pm
SHIRIN

Kiarostami finally made a melodramatic feature film using professional actors and following a classic narrative arc? Yes and no. In clever, unpredictable Kiarostami fashion, *Shirin* both fulfills and subverts those popular, time-honored parameters. As critic Jonathan Rosenbaum points out, he nearly succeeds in transforming the professionals into non-actors who, here, appear as women in a theater watching a dramatization of *Khosrow and Shirin*, the well-known, ancient Persian tale by Nizami Ganjavi. While the dramatic soundtrack plays, Kiarostami shows only the close-up faces of the female viewers as they react to the fictionalized tragedy about the real Armenian princess Shirin and the two men in love with her. The only images of the film the women are watching are created in the imaginations of the audience of *Shirin*, who receive cues from both the soundtrack, the women's expressions and perhaps any other assumptions about the women themselves. In this regard, the film is an infinite number of films. Featuring many famous actresses and a celebrated tale not well known to Western audiences—with the exception of one—the film is also a markedly different experience to different cultures and, then again, to different sexes, and yet everyone must see some of themselves looking back at them as they gaze into Kiarostami's magical mirror.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Mahnaz Afshar, Pegah Ahangarani, Taraneh Alidoosti
Iran 2008, DCP, color, 92 min. Persian with English subtitles

sunday may 21 at 7pm
CLOSE-UP NEMA-YE NAZDIK

When Kiarostami ran across a news story about a man going to trial for deceiving a middle-class fam-



Abbas Kiarostami SHIRIN



Abbas Kiarostami *CLOSE-UP*

ily by pretending to be celebrated Iranian director Mohsen Makhmalbaf, he was not content with simply making a documentary or a fiction film about the case; he did both. In fact, Kiarostami himself becomes part of the story while giving the film and the reality a new, surprising ending. Aside from the famous filmmaker, Hossain Sabzian—the unemployed, impoverished protagonist at the center—also bears certain resemblance to fellow Kiarostami antiheroes, particularly the impassioned, duplicitous boy in *The Traveler*. In this case, Sabzian's love of cinema intersects with his desire for respect and admiration, and this blinds him to all other—potentially criminal—concerns. Kiarostami recruits both Sabzian and the family to reenact scenes from the incident and is not only permitted to film the trial, but apparently also collaborated with Sabzian on his affecting words in court. In exploring the hows and whys of this baffling deception, Kiarostami boldly synthesizes cinema and reality, adding revelatory dimensions to both.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Hossain Sabzian, Hassan Farazmand, Abolfazi Ahankhah
Iran 1990, 35mm, color, 98 min. Persian and Azerbaijani with English subtitles

monday may 22 at 7pm 24 FRAMES

Completed after his death by his son Ahmed, Kiarostami's final film is a hypnotic swan song that connects his photography and painting to his filmmaking by elegantly animating a series of still images. Including "about four and a half minutes of what I imagined might have taken place before or after each image that I captured," the director begins with a picture not his own: Pieter Bruegel's *The Hunters in the Snow*, and counts down from there with similarly composed tableaux foregrounding nature and animals, with the occasional human intervention. Resembling the visual haikus of his earlier experiment *Five*, these minimalist landscapes of activity within stillness seem whittled down to their essential elements—often aided by the whitening, isolating magic of snowfall. Strangely situated in a place both real and unreal, the quiet dramas that unfold sometimes seem like exercises in detachment or, perhaps, illustrations

of the emotional investment that close observation compels. The culminating frame encapsulates the serenity, unpredictability, humor, restlessness, and occasional sentimentality of Kiarostami's art as well as the mysterious, contradictory powers of the image captured and framed; it is a beautiful farewell, eerily anticipating the filmmaker's coming death and the immortal tracks he would leave behind.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami
Iran/France 2017, DCP, b/w & color, 114 min

friday may 26 at 7pm LIKE SOMEONE IN LOVE

Setting his film in Japan partly because of the uniquely deep clash between tradition and modernity, Kiarostami picks up many of the strands he started in *Certified Copy* in this less surreal, less distanced study of knowing and not knowing. The reflections and projections now bounce among a trio of characters and are fogged by delusion and deception—or simply missed communications. The opening dialogue (*I'm not lying to you...*) is part of a disembodied one-sided conversation establishing the alienated, fragmented atmosphere—as well as the deceit inherent to film. The voice is that of Akiko, a college student who works as a prostitute. Already subject to objectification and the fulfillment of others' fantasies, Akiko's identity is particularly slippery, as much to everyone around her as to herself. Just who is she to her volatile fiancé, who knows nothing of her night life? Or her beloved grandmother she can't bear to see? Or to the old, retired professor and translator who hires her one evening? "[Q]uestion marks are the punctuation of life," states the director. "When it comes to showing human beings, complexity and concealment are a crucial part of the character." As the projected identities collide with reality, rupture is inevitable.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami and Banafsheh Violet Modaresi. With Rin Takanashi, Tadashi Okuno, Ryo Kase
Japan/France 2012, DCP, color, 109 min. Japanese with English subtitles

saturday may 27 at 7pm CERTIFIED COPY COPIE CONFORME

Kiarostami's first cinematic venture outside of Iran bears all the hallmarks of independent Europe-



Abbas Kiarostami *CERTIFIED COPY*

an cinema—even the omnipresent Juliette Binoche. However, this is Kiarostami; he will manipulate and transcend such expectations. In a slightly more stylized and theatrical mode, the director focuses on Binoche's French antiques dealer and her exchanges with a British author—played by opera star William Shimell—of a book about the question of copies versus originals. As the two wander around a village in Tuscany, their unstable, fluctuating roles—in the relationship and in the film—begin to resemble so many reflections within what appears to be a rather fluid, multiplying reality. Yet, as the writer's book argues, these reflections—or copies—are not necessarily less meaningful than the original. And those sitting in the theater should know. More than any of Kiarostami's films, *Certified Copy* makes viewers profoundly aware of all the personal, cultural and intellectual baggage audiences carry into the theater—and everywhere else.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Juliette Binoche, William Shimell, Adrian Moore
France/Italy/Belgium/Iran 2010, 35mm, color, 106 min. French, English and Italian with English subtitles



Abbas Kiarostami *LIKE SOMEONE IN LOVE*



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NOBODY'S HERO BY ALAIN GUIRAUDIE

FEBRUARY 6 – FEBRUARY 19

The latest feature by French filmmaker and author Alain Guiraudie (b. 1964) is a wickedly insightful political comedy that has drawn controversy since its Berlinale premiere by playfully cutting close to the bone of a profoundly urgent topic: the Islamophobic paranoia ascendant in recent years in France and much of the Western world. Like all of Guiraudie's films, *Nobody's Hero* takes place far from the Parisian settings traditionally dominant in French cinema—in the central city of Clermont-Ferrand to be exact—and in a parallel world where queer desire is the quotidian norm. As in Guiraudie's previous works, such as *The King of Escape* (2009) and *Staying Vertical* (2016), *Nobody's Hero* features a comically improbable anti-hero: here, an awkward, beleaguered, yet highly opinionated computer programmer whose rigidly ordered life descends into chaos when he becomes entangled in a web of errant desire between a sex worker with whom he spontaneously falls madly in love, her jealous husband, and a young Arab drifter who decamps in his building (and eventually his apartment) shortly after a bombing unsettles the community. Added to the deliriously overcrowded equation are a comely coworker with outspoken amorous intent and a lively hive of neighbors whose whispered suspicions about his relationship with the young man unleash repressed and absurdly limited, but all-too-familiar *idées fixes* about culture, immigration and nation. A source of the film's rich, ribald comedy and texture is the presence of Noémie Lvovsky, an accomplished actress and director of arch comedies woefully little-known outside of France, in the role of the self-assured yet fickle sex worker who acts as the fulcrum of the film's ever-shifting dynamic of desire. — HG

Special thanks: Olivier Favry, Cultural Attaché/Director of the Villa Albertine Boston, Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States and Consulate General of France in Boston.

monday february 6 at 7pm
sunday february 12 at 3pm
monday february 13 at 7pm
sunday february 19 at 7pm

NOBODY'S HERO VIENS JE T'EMMÈNE
Directed by Alain Guiraudie. With Jean-Charles Clichet, Noémie Lvovsky, Ilies Kadri
France 2022, DCP, color, 100 min. French with English subtitles



Alain Guiraudie *NOBODY'S HERO*

in person

JOYCE CHOPRA feb 3
ERNIE GEHR feb 10 & 11
NANCY D. KATES feb 17
SERET SCOTT feb 27
YOUJIN MOON mar 20
ANDRÉS DI TELLA mar 24 – 27
KIVU RUHORAHOZA mar 31 – apr 7
ABOUBAKAR SANOGO apr 1
ANNABELLE AVENTURIN apr 2
MAHEN BONETTI apr 2
ALICE DIOP apr 10

coming this summer

THE COMPLETE YASUJIRO OZU
ALL NIGHT MOVIE MARATHON

The Archive is extremely grateful to June Yip, AB '85, and David Wong, AB '85, for their generous support of the Harvard Film Archive's ongoing visiting filmmaker program. Thanks to their generosity the Archive is able to continue inviting filmmakers, artists and scholars to present their work at the HFA and interact with the Harvard film community.