

FILM

SPRING 2012 National Gallery of Art



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National Gallery of Art

Films are screened in the Gallery's East Building Auditorium, Fourth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW. Works are presented in original formats and seating is on a first-come, first-seated basis. Doors open thirty minutes before each show and programs are subject to change. For more information, visit www.nga.gov/programs/film, e-mail film_department@nga.gov, or call (202) 842-6799.

The spring film season brings key restorations, new works, and special guests in a celebration of the art of the moving image. *Japanese Divas* spotlights thirteen feature films, primarily from the 1950s, by auteurs such as Yasujiro Ozu, Kenji Mizoguchi, and Akira Kurosawa, who collaborated with major acting talents like Setsuko Hara, Machiko Kyo, Hideko Takamine, Kinuyo Tanaka, and Isuzu Yamada to develop some of the most revered films of the twentieth century. The spectacular world of Joan Miró is explored through a program of short nonfiction profiles of the artist by his friend, famed Catalan director Pere Portabella. The Gallery welcomes back renowned pianist Dennis James in a program of American silents, as well as conductor Gillian B. Anderson, who leads a performance of original scores developed for shorts by Segundo de Chomón. Other programs present the work of legendary Czech animator Jan Švankmajer, two titles by the late Greek director Michael Cacoyannis, three programs of recent shorts by contemporary American director Bill Morrison, and a weekend of films and videos by the deeply influential avant-garde filmmaker Ernie Gehr, who will appear in person. Winning selections from the 2011 Black Maria Film and Video Festival will be presented, as will highlights from the most recent Flaherty Film Seminar, "Sonic Truth." Corinna Belz's *Gerhard Richter Painting* and James June Schneider's new essay *Jean Epstein, Young Oceans of Cinema* close the spring season.



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1 Sat 4:00 Robert Bresson: Une Femme Douce; L'Argent p. 9

6 Fri 2:30 Japanese Divas: Ugetsu Monogatari; Sisters of the Gion p. 16

7 Sat 2:00 Japanese Divas: Street of Shame p. 17
4:00 Japanese Divas: Tokyo Story p. 17

8 Sun 4:30 Japanese Divas: Rashomon p. 17

15 Sun 4:00 Japanese Divas: Sansho the Bailiff p. 20

20 Fri 2:30 Japanese Divas: Life of Oharu p. 20

21 Sat 2:30 Japanese Divas: Late Spring p. 20

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28 Sat 2:30 Japanese Divas: Early Summer p. 20

29 Sun 4:30 Japanese Divas: Tokyo Twilight p. 23

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3	Thu	12:30	Le Mystère Picasso	p. 10
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4	Fri	2:00	Japanese Divas: Throne of Blood	p. 23
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5	Sat	1:00	Japanese Divas: Flowing	p. 23
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6	Sun	4:30	Ciné-Concert: Segundo de Chomón Shorts	p. 10
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10	Thur	2:30	Miró as Portrayed by Portabella	p. 10
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12	Sat	2:30	Ernie Gehr: Perspectives on the Street	p. 27
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13	Sun	4:30	Ernie Gehr: Visiting Video Shadows	p. 27
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16	Wed	12:10	Ciné-Concert: A Suitcase Full of Chocolate – Sofia Cosma	p. 11
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19	Sat	2:00	In Praise of Independents: The Flaherty	p. 11
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20	Sun	4:00	Michael Cacoyannis: The Cherry Orchard	p. 28
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24	Thu	12:30	Miró as Portrayed by Portabella	p. 10
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25	Fri	12:30	Miró as Portrayed by Portabella	p. 10
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26	Sat	1:00	The Tales of Jan Švankmajer: Shorts	p. 31
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27	Sun	4:30	The Tales of Jan Švankmajer: Little Otik	p. 31
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2	Sat	3:30	The Tales of Jan Švankmajer: Alice	p. 32
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3	Sun	4:00	The Tales of Jan Švankmajer: Faust	p. 32
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7	Thu	12:30	Miró: The Phosphorescent Trails of Snails	p. 11
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8	Fri	12:30	Miró: The Phosphorescent Trails of Snails	p. 11
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9	Sat	1:00	Paul Goodman Changed My Life	p. 12
		3:30	The Black Maria: Selections from the Festival	p. 12

10	Sun	4:30	The Tales of Jan Švankmajer: Surviving Life (Theory and Practice)	p. 34
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16	Sat	2:30	Bill Morrison: The Miners' Hymns	p. 34
		4:30	Bill Morrison: Ciné-Concert: Tributes-Pulse	p. 35

17	Sun	4:00	Bill Morrison: Spark of Being; Outerborough; Release	p. 35
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23	Sat	2:30	Ciné-Concert: Amarilly of Clothesline Alley; His People	p. 12
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24	Sun	4:00	Ciné-Concert and Discussion: George Bellows – A Musical View	p. 13
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30	Sat	2:00	Gerhard Richter Painting	p. 13
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Art Films and Events

Apr 1–Jun 30

UNE FEMME DOUCE
followed by L'ARGENT

Sun Apr 1 (4:00)

The pairing of two films by Robert Bresson concludes the complete retrospective of his work that began in March. *Une Femme Douce* is an adaptation of the elliptical short story *A Gentle Creature* (1876) by Dostoyevsky. The suicide of a young wife (Dominique Sanda) leads her bewildered husband, the owner of a pawn shop, to narrate their story in an attempt to make sense of the tragedy. “The extraordinary thing about the film is that any interpretation can be read into it” — Tom Milne. (1969, 35 mm, French with subtitles, 88 minutes)

In *L'Argent*, an innocent man is caught in an escalating cycle of evil when a forged five-hundred-franc note, casually passed off, leads to bribery, imprisonment, a marriage breakup, murder — and finally, his arrest. Adapted from Leo Tolstoy's *The False Note*, “*L'Argent* has the manner of an official report...telling its ruthless tale without once raising its voice” — Russell Merritt. (1982, 35 mm, French with subtitles, 85 minutes)

HANEZU

Sun Apr 22 (4:30)

One of the most elegant films at the 2011 Festival de Cannes was this gentle Japanese love story, so quietly reflective it slipped under the radar. A straightforward tale of a love triangle in the remote mountainous Nara region, the contemporary story is so tightly bound to an ancient landscape myth that the two can hardly be untangled. (*Hanezu*, the word, signifies an obscure shade of red once celebrated in medieval love poetry but unrecognized in modern Japan.) As one reviewer noted, watching this film is not the kind of experience that translates easily into today's language. “It's a combination of haiku,



Zen meditation, Japanese landscape painting, and Faulkner's famous observation that the past is not dead and is not even past"—Andrew O'Hehir. (Naomi Kawase, 2011, DCP, Japanese with subtitles, 91 minutes)

LE MYSTÈRE PICASSO

Wed May 2, Thu May 3 (12:30)

The classic 1956 film by Henri-Georges Clouzot—an imaginative homage to his friend Picasso as the maestro paints before the camera—is shown in conjunction with the exhibition *Picasso's Drawings, 1890–1921: Reinventing Tradition*. (Henri-Georges Clouzot, 1956, 35 mm, French with subtitles, 78 minutes)

CINÉ-CONCERT: SEGUNDO DE CHOMÓN SHORTS

Gillian B. Anderson, conductor

Sun May 6 (4:30)

Segundo de Chomón (1871–1929) worked in Barcelona, Paris, and Turin. He made more than three hundred silent films and invented effects for features like *Cabiria* (1914) and *Napoleon* (1927). Often compared to French magician and filmmaker Georges Méliès for the technical quality and creativity of his work, Chomón was considered one of the great men of the theater and was hired by major companies like Pathé Frères and Itala Films. The films in this program, *Les Cent Trucs*, *Le Spectre Rouge*, *Les Oeufs de Pâques*, *Les Tulipes*, *En avant la Musique*, and *Le Voyage sur Jupiter*, among others, have the “once upon a time” quality of folk tales with their trick photography used to achieve surreal or Freudian effects. Talented composers from the New York University Steinhardt Film Scoring Program have limited their melodic, rhythmic and harmonic palettes and gestures to those of the first decade of the twentieth century and have incorporated Catalan melodies. With thanks to Ron Sadoff and to The Sorel Organization for support. (c. 1903–1912, total running time approximately 70 minutes)

MIRÓ AS PORTRAYED BY PORTABELLA

Thu May 10 (2:30)

Thu May 24, Fri May 25 (12:30)

Pere Portabella (born 1929), a veteran Barcelona filmmaker whose narrative features and short films are rich in Catalan textures, was

a friend of Joan Miró and worked closely with the artist on special projects, including a group of interesting documentary shorts about his friend: *Miró 37/Aidez l'Espagne* (1969), *Miró l'Altre* (1969), *Miró Tapís* (1974), and *Miró la Forja* (1973). (Pere Portabella, DigiBeta from 35 mm, total running time 73 minutes)

CINÉ-CONCERT: A SUITCASE FULL OF CHOCOLATE—

SOFIA COSMA

Introduction and recital by pianist Lincoln Mayorga

Wed May 16 (12:10)

A Suitcase Full of Chocolate recounts the extraordinary history of Sofia Cosma, a brilliant concert pianist whose career was suppressed first by the Nazis and later by the Soviets. Years later, against all odds, Cosma reconstructed her life and profession as a performer in Romania, becoming one of the most celebrated pianists of Eastern Europe, then continued her work for many years in the United States and finally in Russia. (Lincoln Mayorga, 2011, DigiBeta, 93 minutes)

IN PRAISE OF INDEPENDENTS: THE FLAHERTY

Sat May 19 (2:00)

The annual Robert Flaherty Seminar is an acclaimed international forum for independent filmmakers, artists, critics, and curators. Founded by Frances Flaherty, widow of Robert Flaherty, the seminar is now in its fifty-seventh year. This program includes a selection of experiments, documentaries, and shorts from the 2011 “Sonic Truth” seminar, programmed by historian and curator Dan Streible, department of cinema studies, New York University. This year's selection includes city symphonies, music documentaries, and works by Les Blank, Frank Scheffer, Sid Laverents, and Lillian Schwartz, among others. (Total running time approximately 170 minutes)

MIRÓ: THE PHOSPHORESCENT TRAILS OF SNAILS

Thu Jun 7, Fri Jun 8 (12:30)

A recent film made for Spanish television poetically combines documentary and fiction elements to explore color, symbol, and form in Miró's art, drawing inspiration from Yvon Taillandier and from *Je Travaille comme un Jardinier*. (TV Mallorca, 2006, 54 minutes)

PAUL GOODMAN CHANGED MY LIFE

Sat Jun 9 (1:00)

Rebel philosopher Paul Goodman wrote *Growing Up Absurd*, which became a kind of manual for the youth of the 1960s. In that book and others, he encouraged young Americans to challenge the status quo—the well-established systems whose visible failings, he believed, were crippling society at large. As an outspoken public guru (and instructor at a number of universities including Black Mountain College), Goodman was an omnipresent figure for over a decade. The film provides a fresh look at his life and work. (Jonathan Lee, 2011, HD-Cam, 90 minutes)

THE BLACK MARIA: SELECTIONS FROM THE FESTIVAL

Sat June 9 (3:30)

Named for Thomas Edison's pioneering New Jersey film studio, this renowned festival competition is now in its thirtieth year. A selection of the festival's best new documentary and experimental shorts—cutting-edge works from independent film and video makers—is culled from the December 2011 judging and presented by the Black Maria's founding director, John Columbus. (Total running time approximately 120 minutes)

CINÉ-CONCERT: HIS PEOPLE**preceded by AMARILLY OF CLOTHESLINE ALLEY****Dennis James, piano, and Douglas Bowles, tenor**

Sat Jun 23 (2:30)

In *His People*, shot on Manhattan's Lower East Side, the sons of a Russian immigrant pushcart peddler are causing huge problems for the family. Determined to become a lawyer, son Morris strives to conceal his true identity, while brother Sammy turns to prizefighting and then gets an Irish girlfriend. Max Dupont's location cinematography adds piquant atmosphere, while period-style vocals and piano score, performed live, supply a 1920s milieu. (Edward Sloman, 1925, 16 mm, 93 minutes)

Amarilly of Clothesline Alley stars Mary Pickford as a down-to-earth Irish cigarette girl in love with the bartender at the Cyclone Café....until she gets a taste of the uptown life. (Marshall A. Neilan, 1918, 35 mm, 67 minutes)

CINÉ-CONCERT AND DISCUSSION:**GEORGE BELLOW—A MUSICAL VIEW****Lecture and performance by pianist Leslie Amper**

Sun Jun 24 (4:00)

Besides playing a vital role in the New York art scene of the early twentieth century, George and Emma Bellows were regulars at concerts, vaudeville shows, dance events, and the cinema. A pianist herself, Emma accompanied silent movies and dance classes, while George was a talented choral singer and drummer. A screening of D. W. Griffith's *The New York Hat* (1912, 35 mm, 15 minutes)—shot near Emma's childhood home—concludes the program, with piano accompaniment by Leslie Amper, who also discusses the musical life of the Bellows. (Total running time approximately 70 minutes)

GERHARD RICHTER PAINTING

Sat Jun 30 (2:00)

One of the most remarkable yet oddly inaccessible painters working today is German artist Gerhard Richter. With an astonishing variety of techniques that have garnered worldwide acclaim, Richter has also written commandingly on the matter of art-making and its position in contemporary society. Belz's new portrait views the artist, who proved a difficult but fascinating subject, from a variety of stances. "Now that there are no priests or philosophers left, artists are the most important people in the world."—Gerhard Richter. (Corinna Belz, 2011, 35 mm, German with subtitles, 97 minutes)

JEAN EPSTEIN, YOUNG OCEANS OF CINEMA**Washington premiere**

Sat Jun 30 (4:00)

A new portrait of the prominent French avant-garde director and film theorist Jean Epstein (1897–1953) focuses on his poetic renderings of the sea, the works he photographed in Brittany, including *Le Tempestaire* (1947) and *Les Feux de la Mer* (1948). The director's sister, Marie Epstein, and fishermen and other Bretons who played in his films recall his working methods. (James June Schneider, 2011, HD-Cam, French with subtitles, 68 minutes)



Japanese Divas

Apr 6 – May 5

Multitalented actresses Setsuko Hara, Machiko Kyo, Hideko Takamine, Kinuyo Tanaka, Ayako Wakao, and Isuzu Yamada — icons from the golden age of twentieth-century Japanese cinema — rose to international prominence by enchanting audiences with their beauty, elegance, and commanding range of expression. The thirteen films in the program (both *jidai-geki*, or period dramas, and *gendai-geki*, or contemporary stories) include works by many of Japan's legendary filmmakers. With special thanks to Janus Criterion, Film Forum, and the Japan Foundation for support.

UGETSU MONOGATARI

followed by SISTERS OF THE GION

Fri Apr 6 (2:30)

In the mid-sixteenth century, a time of civil war in Japan, an enterprising potter (Masayuki Mori) leaves his wife (Kinuyo Tanaka) to sell his pots. Away from home, he is bewitched by a phantom princess (Machiko Kyo) and, when her siren spell has ended, returns to find that his home has been destroyed. The theme of the deceptive nature of ambition and longing is carried by the powerful performances and through Kazuo Miyagawa's photography. "An eerie netherworld built out of shadows and lighting, decor and texture, and the graceful chicanery of human desire" — Pacific Film Archive. (Kenji Mizoguchi, 1953, 35 mm, Japanese with subtitles, 96 minutes)

In *Sisters of the Gion*, geisha siblings Yoko Umemura and Isuzu Yamada bring contrasting attitudes to their work — the former traditional and loyal, the latter free-thinking and cynical — and then, Yamada's clever mouth causes big trouble. Ultimately, neither sister is able to break with the past. Against the backdrop of Westernization during the Taisho era (1912–1926), this parable of societal conflict

became a recurring feature of Mizoguchi's prewar films. (*Gion no shimai*, Kenji Mizoguchi, 1936, 35 mm, subtitles, 68 minutes)

STREET OF SHAME

Sat Apr 7 (2:00)

Rumors about impending antiprostitution laws hum through the center of Tokyo's red-light district as the life stories of "Dreamland" denizens unfold — bespectacled housewife Michiyo Kogure, yen-counting Ayako Wakao, and the raucously Americanized Mickey (Machiko Kyo). Mizoguchi's last film, reputedly an important influence on Japan's prostitution reforms (passed the following year), recalls the theme of many of the director's best works — living conditions of women and underlying moral attitudes within an isolated society. (*Akassen chitai*, Kenji Mizoguchi, 1956, 35 mm, Japanese with subtitles, 86 minutes)

TOKYO STORY

Sat Apr 7 (4:00)

Older provincial couple Chishu Ryu and Chieko Higashiyama travel to Tokyo to visit their married children who, they discover, have no time to spare. Only one — their son's widow, Setsuko Hara — is able to connect. As in other films by Ozu, nuanced performances and precise camera moves compellingly portray generational struggles within a family. "A breadth and insight that makes comparisons with Chekhov entirely apposite" — British Film Institute. (*Tôkyô monogatari*, Yasujiro Ozu, 1953, 35 mm, Japanese with subtitles, 139 minutes)

RASHOMON

Sun Apr 8 (4:30)

Rape and murder in twelfth-century Kyoto, as viewed from four conflicting eye-witness accounts, was the basis for *Rashomon*, the film that introduced Japanese cinema to mass audiences in the West. Adapted from stories by Ryūnosuke Akutagawa, one of the first Japanese writers to be popularized outside Japan, the film's international acclaim vaulted its unknown director into world prominence. As the bandit, Toshiro Mifune delivers a potent performance so over-the-top it appears authentic, while Machiko Kyo's part as the princess victim landed her a *Life* magazine cover and, later, a Hollywood contract. (Akira Kurosawa, 1950, 35 mm, Japanese with subtitles, 88 minutes)



SANSHO THE BAILIFF

Sun Apr 15 (4:00)

When the family of a benevolent but banished local governor in feudal-era Japan is ruthlessly attacked by bandits, wife Kinuyo Tanaka and children Yoshiaka Hanayagi and Kyoko Kagawa are sold into prostitution and slavery. *Sansho the Bailiff*, Mizoguchi's film adaptation of celebrated writer Mori Ogai's short story based on folk narrative, has achieved a legendary status of its own, "impassioned and elegiac, achingly remote in its fragile beauty" — Tony Rayns. (*Sansho dayu*, Kenji Mizoguchi, 1954, 35 mm, Japanese with subtitles, 123 minutes)

LIFE OF OHARU

Fri Apr 20 (2:30)

Kenji Mizoguchi's sensitivity to women's culture and his deftness with period subjects gives the Edo-era *Life of Oharu* the gravity and texture of a dense novel. The film is adapted from Saikaku's seventeenth-century story of a samurai's daughter (Kinuyo Tanaka) who falls down the social hierarchy, descending from courtesan to geisha and outcast. For Mizoguchi, this film was one of his highest achievements, from its masterful direction to the accomplished camera work, costuming, and decor. (*Saikaku ichidai onna*, Kenji Mizoguchi, 35 mm, Japanese with subtitles, 1952, 148 minutes)

LATE SPRING

Sat Apr 21 (2:30)

Devoted dad Chishu Ryu becomes matchmaker for radiant daughter Setsuko Hara, who in turn reluctantly consents to an alliance when told that her widowed father might remarry. Ozu's masterpiece is a thoughtful reflection on thorny family politics, "one of the most perfect, most complete, and most successful studies of character ever achieved in Japanese cinema" — Donald Richie. (*Banshun*, Yasujiro Ozu, 1949, 35 mm, Japanese with subtitles, 108 minutes)

EARLY SUMMER

Sat Apr 28 (2:30)

In the city of Kamakura a three-generation, six-member family lives together amicably until daughter Setsuko Hara marries and the family breaks apart. About his beautifully balanced ensemble piece,





Ozu said, "I was interested in getting much deeper than just the story itself; I wanted to depict the cycles of life, the transience of life.... Consequently, I didn't force the action but tried to leave some spaces unfilled." While the plot seems simple, "a description gives no indication of the film's enormous emotional power" — Donald Richie. (*Bakushu*, Yasujiro Ozu, 1951, 35 mm, Japanese with subtitles, 135 minutes)

TOKYO TWILIGHT

Sun Apr 29 (4:30)

A late 1950s masterpiece, *Tokyo Twilight* is Ozu's final black-and-white work, a moving family tragedy of epic proportions. Chishu Ryu lives with his two daughters, Setsuko Hara and the younger Ineko Arima, both of whom are entangled in prickly relationships. Without warning, the younger daughter encounters someone who may in fact be her mother (Isuzu Yamada), a woman who had abandoned her home years before. If the characters' tribulations seem intense, *Tokyo Twilight*'s stylistic mannerisms are brilliant, "understated, distilled in sounds and silences.... the meaning of the film rests in its pointed silences." — Don Willis. (*Tôkyô boshoku*, Yasujiro Ozu, 1957, 35 mm, Japanese with subtitles, 140 minutes)

THRONE OF BLOOD

Fri May 4 (2:00)

Transforming *Macbeth* into a medieval Japanese legend, Kurosawa masterfully establishes the right mood of obsessive madness. Isuzu Yamada is the Noh-influenced Lady Macbeth and Toshiro Mifune is Macbeth—the samurai Washizu, more ruthless than Shakespeare's original. "Visually ravishing, employing compositional tableaux from the Noh drama, high contrast photography, and extraordinary images of rain, fog, horses; all contributing to the expression of a doom-laden universe"—Rod McShane. (*Kumonosu-jo*, Akira Kurosawa, 1957, 35 mm, Japanese with subtitles, 110 minutes)

FLOWING

Sat May 5 (1:00)

A plaintive account of the impending demise of a geisha house, *Flowing* depicts relationships among a range of women: the owner of the house, Otsuta (Isuzu Yamada), servant Rika (Kinuyo Tanaka), inde-

pendent-minded Katsuyo (Hideko Takamine), older Someka (Haruko Sugimura), and a young daughter apprenticing for the profession. With this adaptation of a novel by female writer Aya Kōda, director Naruse carefully recounts each woman's circumstances, setting the film in the year that prostitution was banned in Japan. (*Nagareru*, Mikio Naruse, 1956, 35 mm, Japanese with subtitles, 117 minutes)

EQUINOX FLOWER

Sat May 5 (3:30)

Ozu's first color film returns to one of his favorite themes, finding stability in a discordant family condition. The "condition" in this case is arranged marriages, for the film is set during a time when these marriages were being challenged by the postwar generation. "This film is so far from taking sides that it is impossible to call the older or younger generation good or bad. It is a balanced picture of Japanese family life, made with loving irony" — Donald Richie. (*Higanbana*, Yasujiro Ozu, 1958, 35 mm, Japanese with subtitles, 118 minutes)

American Originals Now:

Ernie Gehr

May 12–13

The ongoing project *American Originals Now* offers an opportunity for discussion with established independent filmmakers and a chance to share in their art. This two-part retrospective devoted to highlights from the work of Ernie Gehr (born 1943)—one of the most prolific of the generation of American filmmakers who first challenged the notion that the cinema must correspond to visual reality—includes post-screening discussions with the artist. Gehr's concern for film's formal attributes, which can produce beautiful and startling effects, parallels the interests of minimalist art. "Even as film goes the way of all flesh and is supplanted by digital, Gehr's work affirms the persistence of cinema" — Manohla Dargis.





PERSPECTIVES ON THE STREET

Ernie Gehr in person

Sat May 12 (2:30)

This program of three short films (shown in conjunction with the photography exhibition *I Spy: Photography and the Theater of the Street, 1938-2010*) includes one of Gehr's most well-known works, *Side/Walk/Shuttle* (1991, 16 mm), a rhythmic and disorienting study of San Francisco's built environment; *This Side of Paradise* (1991, 16 mm), a meditation on an impromptu Polish flea market set up in Berlin just before the Wall came down; and *Essex Street Market*, remnants of a lost public place in lower Manhattan (2004, silent video, 29 minutes). (Total running time approximately 83 minutes)

VISITING VIDEO SHADOWS

Ernie Gehr in person

Sun May 13 (4:30)

Gehr's change of focus from 16 mm film to digital formats in 2004 brought him new ways of interpreting light, the very subject of his life's work. The short silent piece *Shadow* (2007) is the first in a program of poetic recent short videos, many of which allude to early cinema and the technologies and techniques employed then: magic lanterns, hand-tinted images, and "trick" films. Other works in the program include *Thank You for Visiting* (2010, 12 minutes), *Auto-Collider XIII* (2011, 13 minutes), and *ABRACADABRA* (2009, silent). (Total running time approximately 63 minutes)

Michael Cacoyannis

May 20-26

Greek director Michael Cacoyannis (1921-2011) was internationally renowned not only as a film, theater, and opera director — he was also an accomplished writer, actor, and translator, a designer of settings and costumes, a producer,

and all-around man of the contemporary theatrical arts. He worked on many of the world's great stages for more than sixty years. While known for his productions of the plays of Euripides, he could masterfully adapt modern writers including O'Neill, Chekhov, and of course his Greek contemporary Nikos Kazantzakis, author of *Zorba the Greek*. Cacoyannis' final film, *The Cherry Orchard*, and his lauded adaptation of Euripides' *Electra* are presented as a tribute to the director's career (he died last year). With thanks to the Greek Film Center, Athens, the Michael Cacoyannis Foundation, and the Embassy of Greece.

THE CHERRY ORCHARD

Sun May 20 (4:00)

At the start of the last century, a family of Russian aristocrats on the verge of losing their estate is powerless to prevent the loss. Anton Chekhov's sad and satiric drama about the decline of the landed gentry is given a novel treatment in Cacoyannis' interpretation, as he infers new details about the period and the main characters—Charlotte Rampling as Ranevskaya and Alan Bates as Gayev. Cast members probe their own characters' motives, while the mise-en-scène points to the director's careful study of the art of the period. (1999, 35 mm, 141 minutes)

ELECTRA

Introduction by Martin Winkler

Sat May 26 (3:30)

A rocky landscape photographed in striking black and white by Walter Lassally becomes *Electra's* extended stage, completely open and exposed but also hermetic and eternal. Euripides, wrote Cacoyannis, had an "extraordinary technique of opening up the action to establish a dramatic situation and then focusing in on his characters at such close range that you feel you are looking into their souls." Cacoyannis achieves his theatrical yet blunt stylization through the formal movements of his actors, "and an emphasis he places on significant actions...and the sudden use of turmoil in nature to heighten the violence"—Roger Manvell. (1962, 35 mm, Greek with subtitles, 120 minutes)





The Tales of Jan Švankmajer

May 26 - Jun 10

Heir to the robust traditions of early twentieth-century Central and Eastern European animation artists, Czech avant-garde animator Jan Švankmajer (born 1934) has been a powerful influence on contemporary filmmakers—Terry Gilliam, Tim Burton, and Timothy and Stephen Quay among them. A self-proclaimed surrealist (even a registered member of the Czech Surrealist Society), Švankmajer is just as likely to link his work to oral tradition and folkloric fairytales. His dreamlike, fantastic fables—more Brothers Grimm than Disney—combine puppet animation with ominous subjects and symbols while probing the machinery of the unconscious mind. For pure outré inventiveness and magic, Švankmajer has no equal in cinema today. This series has been organized in association with curator Irena Kovarova. Additional support provided by the Czech Center New York.

ŠVANKMAJER: SHORTS

Sat May 26 (1:00)

A program of classic short works completed between the 1960s and the early 1990s includes *The Flat* (1968, 13 minutes), *The Garden* (1968, 19 minutes), *Jabberwocky* (1971, 12 minutes), *Dimensions of Dialogue* (1983, 11 minutes), *Another Kind of Love* (1988, 4 minutes), *Flora* (1989, 30 seconds), *Meat Love* (1989, 1 minute), and *The Food* (1992, 17 minutes).

LITTLE OTIK

Sun May 27 (4:30)

Inspired by the folk tale *Otesánek*, in which a childless couple adopt a tree stump and treat it as their own baby, the “Little Otik” of the title grows disturbingly large and eventually consumes everything

in its path. “I often work from old fairytales, which are narrated cosmological myths. This myth concerns rebellion against nature and the tragic consequences of that rebellion.... With this film and all my work, all and any interpretation is possible. Because the subconscious and the unconscious work throughout the film, at the end I want to be like the viewer, looking at the work and thinking, ‘What have I done here?’” — Jan Švankmajer. (*Otesánek*, 2000, 35 mm, Czech with subtitles, 132 minutes)

ALICE

Sat Jun 2 (3:30)

A devotee of Lewis Carroll, Švankmajer empathized with the nineteenth-century author and even created, early in his career, an adaptation of Carroll's nonsense poem *Jabberwocky*. Thus *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* offered the right combination of quirkiness and spectacle to inspire Švankmajer's imagination; his ingenious adaptation, in which Alice is portrayed by an actress and an antique doll, is set entirely inside Alice's home. Straying somewhat from the original narrative, Švankmajer's film retains the main characters, cleverly fashioning them out of stuffed toys, bric-a-brac, and bits of furniture in Alice's room. “A wonderland indeed, imbued with a menacing dream logic at once distinctively Švankmajer's yet true to the spirit of Carroll” — Geoff Andrew. (*Něco z Alenky*, 1988, 35 mm, 86 minutes)

FAUST

Sun Jun 3 (4:00)

In Švankmajer's fanciful retelling of the fable, a contemporary “everyman” exits the Prague subway and is lured to a mysterious marionette theater. There, following a dreamlike series of episodes, this unsuspecting soul submits to playing the role of Doctor Faustus. Švankmajer's film mixes a variety of techniques to conjure the various theatrical forms that *Faust* has historically taken — puppet play, ballet, opera, and theater — while including passages from *Faust* texts by Goethe and Marlowe. “A film that galvanizes the mind and astonishes the eye. In a word, magic” — Geoff Andrew. (*Lekce Faust*, 1994, Czech with subtitles, 97 minutes)



SURVIVING LIFE (THEORY AND PRACTICE)

Sun Jun 10 (4:30)

Playfully reinventing his *modus operandi*, Švankmajer here uses colorful photographic cutouts of his actors instead of the actors themselves (“to save money”) and creates a “psychoanalytical comedy” through a blend of collage animation and live action. Middle-aged protagonist Eugene leads a double life, fancying a red-suited woman to love in his symbol-filled dreams. Consulting a therapist who sits under dueling figures of Freud and Jung only adds to Eugene’s complications. “The synthesis of dreams and reality,” according to Švankmajer, “constitute a complete human life.” (*Přežít svůj život*, 2010, 35 mm, Czech with subtitles, 109 minutes)

Bill Morrison: Recent Work

June 16–17

American filmmaker Bill Morrison has devoted much of his artistic career to repurposing archival film footage—creating beautiful new forms from old filmic remnants, frequently collaborating with musicians to engender novel aural and visual sensations. His *Decasia: The State of Decay* (2002), crafted as a bold multimedia event with music by Michael Gordon, is considered a classic of the art film genre, frequently revived at festivals and international art venues. This program includes five recent works completed by Morrison since his much heralded *Decasia*, all of them continuing the tradition of marrying forgotten archival cinema and avant-garde sound.

THE MINERS' HYMNS**Bill Morrison in person**

Sat Jun 16 (2:30)

Reminiscence on the once lively communities of colliers in England’s northeast is set to the music of Icelandic composer Jóhann Jóhann-

son. Morrison used striking black-and-white archival footage of miners and their families that has been preserved in the British Film Institute’s National Film Archive. (2010, 35 mm, 52 minutes)

CINÉ-CONCERT: TRIBUTES-PULSE**Christina Åstrand, Peter Navarro-Alonso, and Simon Christensen in performance**

Sat Jun 16 (4:30)

Morrison’s latest work integrates the music of Danish composer Simon Christensen with fragments of decaying nitrate-based stock, abstractions, and footage of a long-gone era to evoke “the once glorious signifiers of an industrial age and the film stock that captured them”—Anthony Nield. The piece was originally conceived as a tribute to four American musicians—Charles Ives, Conlon Nancarrow, Steve Reich, and Trent Reznor—in four movements: *Shifting*, *Multiple*, *Across*, and *Beat*. The footage of the final movement is a single-take view of the Witte Marine Scrapyard graveyard of ships on Staten Island. (2011, HD-Cam, 65 minutes)

SPARK OF BEING**followed by OUTERBOROUGH and RELEASE**

Sun Jun 17 (4:00)

Jazz musician Dave Douglas collaborated with Morrison to construct *Spark of Being*, an avant-garde interpretation of Mary Shelley’s text for the Frankenstein story, and a fascinating variation on the theme of technology and creation. (2010, HD-Cam, 68 minutes)

The short *Outerborough* (2005, 9 minutes) is fabricated from the footage of the late nineteenth-century film *Across Brooklyn Bridge*, while in the experimental *Release* (2010, 12 minutes) a crowd gathers outside Philadelphia’s Eastern State Penitentiary to witness the March 1930 discharge of Al Capone before his transfer to Chicago, where he would stand trial. Morrison and composer Vijay Iyer worked within a single panning shot to achieve the film’s special effect.

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