Spring Series

Alain Resnais and Fanny Ardant

Czech Modernism
1920 – 1940

In Praise of Independents: The Flaherty

Parisian Panorama
1920 – 1930

Art Films and Events

Amateur Photographer

Belle Toujours

Blockade

Crimson Gold

Days of Autumn

Lonesome with Alloy Orchestra

Paul Mellon: In His Own Words

Rouben Mamoulian

Sergei Paradjanov, The Rebel

Seventh Heaven

Winslow Homer: Society and Solitude

April

1 Sun
4:30 The Flaherty: Czech Dream and The Angìmakers

7 Sat
2:00 The Flaherty: The Gaze Back and It Works; Patty Chang Videoworks

8 Sun
4:30 The Flaherty: The Sky Turns

14 Sat
12:30 Parisian Panorama: Études sur Paris and Paris Cinema

15 Sun
4:30 Parisian Panorama: The Tower; Paris qui dort; Under the Roofs of Paris

21 Sat
10:00 Parisian Panorama: Paris Express and Paris la nuit
3:00 Alain Resnais and Fanny Ardant: Mèlo

22 Sun
5:00 Event: Lonesome with Alloy Orchestra

29 Sun
4:30 Alain Resnais and Fanny Ardant: Life is a Bed of Roses

May

5 Sat
4:00 Event: Seventh Heaven with organist Dennis James

6 Sun
4:30 Event: Days of Autumn

12 Sat
2:00 Event: Sergei Paradjanov: The Rebel; Rouben Mamoulian
4:30 Czech Modernism: Faithless Marijka

13 Sun
4:30 Czech Modernism: From Saturday to Sunday

20 Sun
4:30 Event: Crimson Gold

26 Sat
2:00 Czech Modernism: On the Sunny Side

27 Sun
2:00 Art Film: Winslow Homer: Society and Solitude
5:00 Czech Modernism: The River

June

2 Sat
2:00 Czech Modernism: Virginity
4:00 Event: Belle Toujours

3 Sun
2:00 Czech Modernism: Lecture by Michal Bregant
4:00 Czech Modernism: The Kreutzer Sonata and Such is Life

9 Sat
1:00 Event: Paul Mellon: In His Own Words
4:00 Czech Modernism: Tenka of the Gallows

10 Sun
5:00 Event: Paul Mellon: In His Own Words

15 Fri
12:30 Event: Amateur Photographer and Blockade

16 Sat
12:30 Event: Amateur Photographer and Blockade
2:30 Czech Modernism: The Strike and Crisis

17 Sun
4:00 Czech Modernism: The Distant Journey

Films are shown in original format in the auditorium of the National Gallery’s East Building at 4th Street and Constitution Avenue NW. Seating is on a first-come basis. To ensure a seat, please plan to arrive at least ten minutes before showtime.

Programs are subject to change.

For current information, visit our Web site: www.nga.gov/programs/film.htm or call (202) 842-6799.
Days of Autumn (Días de Otoño)
Washington premiere of the restored print
May 6 at 4:30
Gabriel Figueroa's stunning cinematography grants graceful form to this magical tale of young Luisa, a pastry chef whose seemingly fanciful stories about her romance with the man who rescues her shoe all but rival her pâtisserie's embellished confections. Based on a B. Traven story and adapted for the screen by Emilio Carballido, Julio Alexandar, and the exceptional Roberto Gavaldón (the most respected Mexican director of the period apart from Buñuel), Days of Autumn is an expressive vehicle for actress Pina Pelliker who brings to the role of Luisa "a limitless world of feelings, sensations, moods," wrote Justino Fernandez. "Her duel between reality and imagination affects us deeply." (Roberto Gavaldón, 1962, Spanish with subtitles, 92 minutes)

Sergei Paradjanov, The Rebel also Rouben Mamoulian
Patrick Cazals in person
May 13 at 2:00
A new documentary on the beloved Georgian-Armenian filmmaker from Tbilissi who made the uncommonly beautiful collage films Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors (1967) is introduced by its director, French filmmaker Patrick Cazals. Once blacklisted by Soviet authorities, Sergei Paradjanov was celebrated as a hero and adorned his Yerevan home (now enshrined as a museum) with his paintings, sculpture, and furniture, in addition to artifacts related to his cinema. (Patrick Cazals, 2004, BetaSP, English, French, and Armenian with subtitles, 92 minutes)

Crimson Gold
Hamid Dabashi in person
May 20 at 4:30
The cinema of Iran has been garnering international acclaim for over two decades. Despite its outwardly melodramatic form, Jafar Panahi’s recent Crimson Gold reflects the minutiae of everyday life in Iran with meticulousness and measured poetry. After the screening, Hamid Dabashi, professor of Iranian studies and comparative literature at Columbia University and author of a new book on the history of Iranian cinema, will discuss the film and Panahi’s position within the pantheon. (Jafar Panahi, 2003, 35 mm, Farsi with subtitles, 95 minutes)
Winslow Homer: Society and Solitude

Washington premiere
Steven John Ross in person
May 27 at 2:00

Winlow Homer, unique in American art his history for his documentary and poetic portrayals of pre- and post-Civil War life as well as illustrations for Harper's Weekly, has until now never been the subject of a feature documentary. Steven Ross's new work carefully chronicles both Homer's distinctive biography and his artistic evolution through abundant loca tion footage and interview sequences with artists and Homer scholars including Gallery curator Franklin Kelly. (Steven John Ross, 2007, digital beta, 110 minutes)

Belle Toujours
June 2 at 4:00
Finding inspiration in the cinematic past, namely Luis Buñuel's Belle de jour, Manoel de Oliveira creates a playful and poignant present-day sequel to Buñuel's film (and an implicit homage to a mentor) in Belle Toujours. Critic Diana Sanchez wrote, “Belle Toujours reunites the two main characters of Buñuel’s Belle de jour thirty-eight years later in Paris. Michel Piccoli is again cast as the acromi onous Henri, the keeper of the one secret that Sérénie is desperate to discover…. Now, Henri is disgusted when Sérénie tells him she wishes to react to a convent. Further referencing Buñuel and screenwriter Jean-Claude Carrière, Oliveira casts Bulle Ogier to play in Catherine Deneuve’s unforgettable role (her blonde wig providing a hilarious touch).” (Manoel de Oliveira, 2006, 35 mm, French with subtitles, 70 minutes)

Paul Mellon: In His Own Words
June 9 at 2:00, June 10 at 5:00
A new biographical film celebrates the spirit, life, and philosophy of Paul Mellon. The narration draws from interviews, speeches, and a variety of writings in which Mellon describes his passions, pursuits, and interests, such as family, art, collecting, horses, and racing. This screening is part of a public celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of Paul Mellon’s birth on June 10, 1907. (Joseph Krakora for the National Gallery of Art, 2007, high definition, 60 minutes)

Blockade
also Amateur Photographer
June 15 and 16 at 12:30
“The Siege of Leningrad during World War II lasted 900 days, leaving more than 600,000 dead from starvation, bombings, disease, or cold. Blockade, a compilation film based on silent footage found in Moscow’s archives (to which the filmmaker has added reconstructed sound), is an extraordinary account of life and death in a great city experiencing unprecedented hardship. As the Russian winter eventually takes hold and snow falls over shrouded corpses lying in the streets, Beautiful street sculpture, bridges, palaces, and lampposts are the backdrop for coffins pulled on sleds on frozen walkways.” — New York Film Forum. (Sergei Loznitsa, 2005, digital beta, no dialogue, natural sounds, 52 minutes)

Preceding the film, Amateur Photographer compiles the recollections of a German private serving on the Eastern front, based on his diaries and photographs. (Irina Gedroich, 2004, BetaSP, German with subtitles, 28 minutes)

In Praise of Independents: The Flaherty
For the sixth year, the National Gallery salutes the annual independent seminar and showcase known as The Flaherty, the prestigious American venue designed for the critical study and viewing of experimen tal, documentary, and overlooked works of fiction that takes place annually at Vassar College. A forum of artists, academics, film makers, writers, and critics assembles for the weekend event named after American pioneer filmmaker Robert Flaherty. Special thanks to Linda Lilienfeld, Mary Baron, and Mary Kerr.

Czech Dream preceded by The Angelmakers
April 1 at 4:30
In the last decade, foreign investors have erected over a hundred big-box markets in the Czech Republic. Would-be shoppers immediately scurried inside. Embellished as a social concept with a passion unsurpassed elsewhere in Europe, these stores lure families who often spend entire days. “Part human comedy, part consumer critique, but mostly exploitation art prank, Czech Dream documents—with support from government grants and complicit assistance from several sponsors—the phony marketing and gala opening of the completely fictitious and slyly named ‘Czech Dream Hypermarket’—in reality, only a storefront banner erected in a huge and empty field near Prague. The social fallout from the project is fascinating, especially as it coincided with the Czech government’s own enormous campaign to promote the dream of joining the European Union.”—Steven Mockus. (Vík Klausik and Filip Remunda, 2005, 35 mm, Czech with subtitles, 87 minutes)

Deep in rural Hungary, the village of Nagyrev was the unsettling scene for a bizarre rash of arsenic murders in the 1920s. The Angelmakers documents the events that occurred after a group of village women were held responsible for poisoning their husbands. Unable to discuss this history for many years, descendants recall tales of life, death, and the unending universal battle between the sexes. In a related sequence, present-day echoes emerge as members of an all-female dance club fight for the right to leave home and pursue their own interests. (Astrid Bussink, 2005, BetaSP, Hungarian and English with subtitles, 30 minutes)

The Gaze Back (Volver la Vista) also It Works also Patty Chang Videoworks
Fridolin Schönwiese in person
April 7 at 2:00
Austrian filmmaker Fridolin Schönwiese describes his unusual documentary in this way: “Volver la vista moves the viewer into the perspective of a foreigner, namely Mexicans who live in Austria and Austrians who spend most of their lives in Mexico. In Schönwiese’s unique blend of cliché and yearning, immi grants create a picture—part real, part imaginary—of their homeland and, through establishing their actual location, attempt to define their identities. The participants in the film are accompanied by two cinema tographers who also have gone to a foreign place—one of the cinematographers is Mexican, the other Austrian, and each is filming the other country. Thus, as they shoot, their perspective is compatible with that of the narrators and narratives of the ‘other.’” (Fridolin Schönwiese, 2005, 35 mm, Spanish and German with subtitles, 90 minutes)

Preceding the feature is It Works, Fridolin Schönwiese’s short documentary about four handicapped children who accomplish enor
mous feats of strength—for each child, a critical achievement—in the few minutes that each is on camera. “Without attempting to force the film in a direction dictated by particular pedagogic, sociological, or aesthetic dogma, it Works on the work process itself. Human achievement and film as an instrument of perception stand opposite each other.”—Friedolin Schönwiese.

Installation video artist Patty Chang is known for her ingenious digital videos, including the two works in this program, Untitled (Eud) and Moving Earth. Chang’s works are displayed in conjunction with the exhibition Parisian Panorama where she addresses the issue of the glow of the city, entwined with the technological ideal of photography and filmmaking, as seen through the eyes of a cameraman. Besides filming streets, stations, and monuments, he recorded the apparatus of the cameraman itself behind-the-scenes visits to film factories and studios. (Patty Chang, 1992, 35 mm, silent, 32 minutes)

The Sky Turns (El cielo gira) April 8 at 4:30
At the time of filming, there were fourteen remaining inhabitants of Aldeidade, a village in the barren uplands of Soria (Castilla, Spain). After over a thousand years of uninterrupted vitality in the village, these residents represent the last generation. For the moment, things proceed as normal. Soon, however, and without any outward fanfare, life will come to an end there. The neighbors of this village and the painter Pello Azketa share something in common: for them, things are already disappearing before their eyes. The narrator returns to her origins to make the film as she tries to reclaim her past while she can. (Mercedes Alvarez, 2005, 35 mm, Spanish with subtitles, 110 minutes)

The Tower (La Tour) also Paris qui dort and Under the Roofs of Paris (Sous les toits de Paris) April 15 at 4:30
René Clair’s short homage to the Eiffel Tower was lyrically hailed by contemporary critics as “a poem in iron filigree... sung through a sense of losing yourself in slow motion and the camera itself... the sky changes and the clouds, the eye of René Clair. . . . The Tour must be seen, it is a great lesson of humility, of conciseness, of poetry.”—André Alexandre Aronius, Paris, 1928. (René Clair, 1927, 35 mm, silent, 10 minutes)

In Clair’s earlier and more whimsical Paris qui dort, the tower’s night watchman awakens one day to a city where time has stopped—nothing moves. Looking down on the frozen photographic tableaux below him, he finds a group of air travelers who are, like himself, stranded in time and space. “It was because I was interested in the movement produced by the cinematographic machine that I tried to demonstrate the absurd... that is, to paralyze Paris in order to emphasize how different Paris was, both animated and alive. . . .”—René Clair. (René Clair, 1923, 35 mm, silent, French with translation, 34 minutes)

Under the Roofs of Paris was Clair’s first sound film, a poetic treatise on love and friendship moving back and forth through Parisian streets and bistros with a young street singer (Albert Préjean) who falls for a charming shop girl (Paula Illery). “A delightful experiment with sound, in which music plays a much more important role than conversation.”—R. C. Dale. (René Clair, 1930, 35 mm, French with translation, 82 minutes)

Paris Express also Paris la nuit April 21 at 1:00
Paris Express provides a beguiling gaze at the city in 1928—its boulevards, shops, monuments, and amusements. Completed in black and white by filmmakers Pierre and Jacques Prévert, Marcel Duhamel, and Alberto Cavalcanti at the time of production, the film later received a few color sequences filmed in the same locations. (Pierre and Jacques Prévert, 1928, French with translation, 34 minutes)
The young, innocent countess Rita of Paris la nuit wants to visit the poorer neighborhoods of the city. When someone arranges a trip for her, it proves to be a rather amusing mistake for all concerned. (Henri Diamant Berger, 1930, 35 mm, French dialogue, 64 minutes)

The commitment to the avant-garde demonstrated by early twentieth-century Czech filmmakers played a key role in sustaining the vibrant film culture of Central Europe following World War I. This program examines the forms and figures of Czech film from the mid-1920s through the mid-1940s in a retrospective of twelve works that also anticipate the renowned new wave of the 1950s and 1960s. Two films by the prominent director Gustav Machaty and a selection of social-problem films, such as The Strike and The Distant Journey, are among the highlights. The series was organized by Irena Kovaříková and is presented through the cooperation of the Czech Center, New York, the National Film Archive in Prague, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music, with special thanks also to Adrienne Mancia and Sonja Simony.

Faithless Marijka (Marijka nevěřící) May 12 at 4:30
A mountain woodcutter heads to the wilderness, leaving his wife alone with another man. Faithless Marijka, a delightful portrait of social isolation in the Carpathian Ukraine, makes excellent use of the region’s local inhabitants, past and present, their distinct languages and dialects. The film’s treatment by novelist and communist sympathizer Ivan Olbracht, the avant-garde montage, and a musical score by Martinů (recorded with the orchestra of the Czechoslovak National Theater) provide a rich backdrop. (Vladislav Vančura, 1934, 35 mm, Ruthenian, Slovak, Yiddish, Czech with subtitles, 75 minutes)

From Saturday to Sunday (Ze sobota na nedeˇli) May 19 at 10:00
In Gustav Machaty’s first talking picture, a young woman attracted to the glamour of the chic cocktail crowd learns to accept the much simpler joys of a working-class life. Art direction by Alexander Hackenschmied, a score by composer Jaroslav Jeˇsek, and a script written by surrealist poet Vˇitezaslav Neval ˇl lend From Saturday to Sunday a tender romanticism that prompted one critic to call it a masterpiece of early sound cinema—the tale might be trivial but its recounting is refined. (Gustav Machaty, 1935, 35 mm, Czech with subtitles, 71 minutes)

On the Sunny Side (Na slunecˇní straně) May 26 at 1:00
Adapting a modernist scenario by the Lin-guistic Circle of Prague (including Roman Jakobson, Miloˇslav Disman, and surrealist poet Vˇitezaslav Neval ˇl), director Vladislav Vanˇc u provides a visual sound symphony that compares favorably to the work of later avant-garde practitioners from Buñuel to Bausch.—Pacific Film Archive. (Vladislav Vanˇc u, 1933, 35 mm, Czech with subtitles, 76 minutes)
The River (Reka)
May 27 at 5:00
With a tempo as unhurried as the meandering flow of a river, the film tells the lyrical story of a village magistrate’s son whose affection for his sweetheart eventually spawns a furious wrestle with a river pike. Cloaked in gentle melodrama and cinematographer Jan Stallíček’s beautiful pastoral locations, the tale is told with a mix of actors and non-actors—“believable country folk possessed of a natural charm,” wrote one reviewer. (Josef Rovenský, 1934, 35 mm, Czech with subtitles, 88 minutes)

Virginity (Panenství)
June 2 at 1:00
Evoking a sophisticated romanticism suggestive of Frank Borzage, with fluid camera style and glorious cinematography, Virginity tells the tale of an innocent beauty who attracts many suitors but ends up sacrificing herself to help her dying lover. Marie Majerová’s beautiful wife becomes involved with a wealthy landowner consumed with jealousy after his beautiful wife becomes involved with a violinist. (Gustav Machář, 1926, 35 mm, Czech intertitles translated live, silent with piano and violin accompaniment, 95 minutes)

Such is Life (Takový je život)
June 3 at 4:00
The celebrated master of early Czech cinema Gustav Machář is now largely remembered for two sensational works: Ervín (1933) and Čertík (1929). In his rarely seen earlier Krutýnata, Machář updated Tolstoy’s once scandalous 1889 story about a wealthy landowner consumed with jealousy after his beautiful wife becomes involved with a violinist. (Gustav Machář, 1926, 35 mm, Czech intertitles translated live, silent with piano and violin accompaniment, 95 minutes)

Lecture: Modernism in Central European Life, Art, and Cinema
June 3 at 2:00
The advent of modernism in Central Europe as seen in the cinema and in the modernization of life through art are the subjects of a lecture by Michal Bregant, noted authority on Central and Eastern European film and dean of FAMU, the prestigious film and media school of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. (approximately 50 minutes)

On the Sunny Side (National Film Archive, Prague)

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The Kreutzer Sonata (Kreutzerova sonata)
Donald Sosin on piano with violin accompaniment also Such is Life (Takový je život)
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Such is Life, anticipating the Czech naturalistic tradition of the 1960s (as in Milos Forman’s celebrated oneouer), portrays the trials and tribulations of a washerwoman (Vera Baranovskaya) who at first endures her fate with grace, but ultimately dies and leaves behind a hapless husband and disgraced daughter. German director Karl Junghans uses Prague locations and Soviet montage to weave fragile visual poetry from his characters’ deep deprivations. “Nur Sachlichkeit,” wrote one reviewer, “with montage-based punch.” (Karl Junghans, 1929, 35 mm, silent with live piano accompaniment by Donald Sosin, 73 minutes)

Tonka of the Gallow (Tonka Šibenice)
June 9 at 4:00
Tonka of the Gallow finds a former country wai now hustling as a city hooker. When she volunteers to spend a night in prison with a poor condemned man, her transforming encounter is later viewed as a bad omen and disgraces her even more. Adapted from a novel by Prague journalist Egon Erwin Kisch (and inspired by a newspaper story), this first Czech talking picture features strong performances from the young Yugoslav actress Ilja Rina and celebrated Soviet Vera Baranovskaya. (Karel Anto, 1931, 35 mm, Czech with subtitles, 84 minutes)

The Strike (Siréna)
also Crisis (Krise)
June 16 at 2:30
Based loosely on the historical events following an 1899 worker’s uprising, The Strike chronicles the Hudec family and their dilemma, providing a microcosm of the Czech social crisis at that period. The film’s socialist realist style (the author of the original novel was an important Communist party member in the postwar period) is offset by Juroslav Tučka’s modernist cinematography and music of the brilliant E. F. Burian. The film was awarded top honors at the 1947 Venice Mostra, coincidentally the first and last award for the Czech cinema at any Venice festival. (Karel Steklík, 1947, 35 mm, Czech with subtitles, 83 minutes)

For Crisis, photographer Alexandr Hackenschmied, producer Hans Burger, and American director Herbert Kline joined forces to make a cogent expose on the rising fascist threat in Czechoslovakia during the 1930s. Remarkably, Crisis—which also includes avant-garde performances by the famous comedy team of Iri Voskovcov and Jan Werich—premiered in New York City just two days before the complete German occupation of Czechoslovakia. (Herbert Kline, 1938, 35 mm, English narration, 73 minutes)

The Distant Journey (Daleká cesta)
June 17 at 4:00
One of the first film adaptations of a Holocaust story (written by Mojmir Drvota and Alfred Radok from Erika Kolář’s text), The Distant Journey remains, notes critic J. Hoberman, “among the most original… a stylized dance macabre, audacious and grotesque, looking back to Caligari and forward to the unsettling puppet animations of Jan Svankmajer.” Experiences in the Terezin ghetto, where director Alfred Radok’s father died, are expressed in a chilling stylistic formalism with newreels flashing beneath, and scenes of mass movement staged by a camera moving rhythmically in, up, and back. “Radok’s Terezin scenes,” writes Hoberman, “are charged with a sense of claustrophobic unreality and controlled hysteria… the most compelling moments are based on actual events.” (Alfred Radok, 1948, 35 mm, Czech with subtitles, 100 minutes)

Upcoming Series

Modernity and Tradition: Film in Interwar Central Europe
Opening June 24, 2007, to be included in the summer calendar

From Vault to Screen: New Preservation from American and European Collections
Opening June 30, 2007, to be included in the summer calendar