FILM

INDIANS NOW!

QUALITÉ SUISE: NEW SWISS CINEMA

JULES DASSIN, AMERICAN ABROAD

ROMAN RuINS REBUILT

JOSEF VON STERNBERG, MASTER OF MOOD

PÉTER FÖRДACS

DAMIĐ LEAN, RESTORED
This premiere event is part of an ongoing quarterly program spotlighting the work of young European film directors. Derrier maquis beautifully orchestrated photo and plan-sequences disclose a series of grim complications among Muslim workers at a remote industrial site in a Paris suburb. Director Rabah Ameur-Zaïmeche (who plays site foreman in the film) will be present to discuss his work (2008, 35 mm, French with subtitles, 93 minutes) unconfirmed.

New Short Films from Europe Sunday November 2 at 4:30


In the Land of the Headhunters
Coast Orchestra, live appearance
Sunday November 9 at 4:30

In 1914, eight years before Robert Flaherty’s renowned Nanook of the North, Edward S. Curtis made a dramatic feature with cast drawn entirely from British Columbia’s Kwa!ala’wa’kwa (Kwakwala) Nation. Long forgotten (the film had one brief revival in the 1970s), in the Land of the Headhunters has now come into its own with a full restoration of the print and the original orchestral score. (Edward S. Curtis, 1914, 35 mm, live accomplishment by the all-native Coast Orchestra, 76 minutes).

Herb and Dorothy
Herb and Dorothy Vogel and Megumi Sasaki in person
Sunday November 16 at 4:30

Herb and Dorothy Vogel began buying contemporary art together in the 1960s and eventually amassed one of the finest collections anywhere. Following this screening of her new documentary, director Megumi Sasaki will lead an audience discussion. (Megumi Sasaki, 2008, digital beta, 89 minutes).

The Exiles
Friday November 28 at 1:00 and 3:00
Saturday November 29 at 1:00

A neglected but now restored jewel, The Exiles portrays, in impromptu style reminiscent of John Cassavetes, the relocation of American Indians from their total reservations to downtown Los Angeles in the late 1950s. “British director Mackenzie has an ear for the poetry of ritualized interaction,” wrote one critic, “and an eye for the glib of hard lights on city streets.” (Kent Mackenzie, 1961, 35 mm, 12 minutes).

The Private Life of a Christmas Masterpiece: The Annunciation
Wednesday December 10 through Friday December 12 at 12:30
Wednesday December 17 through Friday December 19 at 12:30
Wednesday December 24 and Friday December 26 at 12:30

Conservators and curators from the UK and US disclose details of the history, iconography, and preservation of one of the great works by Jan van Eyck in the National Gallery’s collection. (BBC, 2006, digital beta, 50 minutes).

Film Indians Now!

In association with the National Museum of the American Indian, this series of films and discussions focuses on the portrayal of American Indians in contemporary moving-image culture. Featuring eight separate events—four at the National Gallery and four at the National Museum of the American Indian—the series is offered in conjunction with the exhibitions George de Forest Brush: The Indian Paintings at the Gallery and Fritz Scholder: Indian (Not Indian) at the NMAI. For a complete listing of all eight events at both museums go to www.americanindian.si.edu.

Part 1: Pretty Pictures
Pocahontas preceded by Conversion
Saturday October 4 at 2:00

Free-spirited Pocahontas lives a carefree life with her animal friends and grandmother until English settlers arrive. A chance encounter with Captain John Smith establishes a friendship that alters both societies, English and Indian, forever (Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg for Walt Disney Pictures, 1995, 35 mm animation, 84 minutes).

In Conversion’s remote corner of the Navajo Nation circa 1950, a missionary’s visit has catastrophic consequences for a family. “A splendid assessment of the
I Was a Swiss Banker

Followed by Langs

Saturday October 11 at 4:00

The career of a young Swiss banker becomes fodder for folk legend when, abruptly, he dives into Lake Constance with a bag full of money. Singing mermaids and other enchanted creatures take over in Imbach’s loopy underwater fairy tale. (Thomas Imbach, 2007, 35 mm, English, Swiss-German, with subtitles, 75 minutes)

The middle-aged filmmaker of Langs leaves his city life behind to live in the Swiss Alps and research the works of nineteenth-century novelist Georg Büchner and romantic poet J.M.R. Lenz. The turbulent inner lives of all—filmmaker, poet, and novel—are mirrored in the jaggied beauty of the landscape. (Thomas Imbach, 2008, 35 mm, German with subtitles, 92 minutes)

Maria Bethânia: Music is Perfume

Georges Gachot in person

Sunday October 12 at 4:00

The first of two documentaries by Georges Gachot captures the charismatic Brazilian diva Maria Bethânia on stage and in private as her unique chemistry with audiences and other musicians is slowly unveiled. “Samba,” Maria intones, “is a sadness that credz.” (Georges Gachot, 2005, 35 mm, Portuguese with English subtitles, 82 minutes)

Martha Argerich: Evening Conversations

preceded by A Little Symphonic Poem

Saturday October 12 at 6:30

Stunning Argentine pianist Martha Argerich, reputedly uncompromising and unwilling to sustain interview, agreed to a few exchanges with Swiss filmmaker Georges Gachot. Their evening chats became occasions filled with music and discussion. (Georges Gachot, 2003, 35 mm, English, French, German with subtitles, 63 minutes)

In A Little Symphonic Poem told by Antonin Dutilh the first movement of the New World Symphony impresses a short story. (1990, digital video, 12 minutes)

Jules Dassin, American Abroad

American director Jules Dassin (1911–2008), son of a barrister from Constestacij, abandoned a promising Hollywood career during the blacklist era to move to Europe. Married to an actress, and later, Greek culture minister Melina Mercouri, he shared a passion for Greek art and even urged the return of the Parthenon sculptures to Greece. Dassin died on March 31. His stance toward his life abroad is apparent in his work.

Phèdre

Saturday October 1 at 2:30

Inspired by Euripides’ Hippolytus, Phèdre was a vehicle for Melina Mercouri, who in act 4 is the wealthy wife of Greek shipping magnate Ballef, to lose her beauty and even her sanity. This passion is now dead, and it has little in common with the novel except a volcanic eruption. The godfather
discuss the film’s style and implementation.

The Last Days of Pompeii

Introduction by Martin Winkler

Saturday October 25 at 2:00

Two adaptations of Edward George Bulwer-Lytton’s best-selling 1834 novel—the 1935 RKO version by Ernst B. Schoedsack and a new restoration of a rare 1913 silent Italian costume drama—are discussed following the screenings. Schoedsack’s RKO film, with stunning sets and startling effects, carries a disclaimer saying that it has little in common with the novel except a volcanic eruption. The 1913 historical Italian drama by Eleuterio Rodolfi attempts to revive the characters and plot elements of the book. (Total running time approximately 198 minutes with intermission)

Roman Ruins Rebuilt

Complementing the exhibition Pompeii and the Roman Villa, this program features three variations on the theme of reconstructing the ancient Roman world—the arenas, houses, baths, and temples—for the cinema. Martin M. Winkler, professor of classical studies at George Mason University, introduces each program. Winkler has edited the essay collections Classical Myth and Culture in the Cinema, Gladiator: Film and History; Troy: From Homer’s Iliad to Hollywood Epic; and Spartacus: Film and History.

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Antony and Cleopatra (Marcantonio e Cleopatra)
Introduction by Martin Winkler
James Doering on piano
Premiere of original 1914 score
Saturday November 15 at 3:00
A 1913 Italian production (the only extant copy is this slightly shorter 1917 re-release) presents a classic East-West confrontation on an epic scale. Shot on location in Italy and Egypt and bolstered by omate sets and a huge cast, the film caught the attention of influential American film promoter George Kleine, who bought distribution rights and hired George Cukor to compose a score for the American premiere. Cukor’s theme music, researched and recently adapted for piano by James Doering, has not been performed in public since 1914. (Ennio Guarrasi for Ciné, 1913, 16 mm, 80 minutes)

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum
Introduction by Martin Winkler
Sunday November 23 at 4:30
Inspired by the Roman comic playwright Plautus and based on Stephen Sondheim’s 1960s musical, this period farce finds disreputable slave Zero Mostel surprisingly full of delightful experimental touches and twists, Sternberg’s first feature. “I had in mind a visual poem,” replied Von Sternberg. (1925, 35 mm, silent with live accompaniment, 79 minutes)

The Salvation Hunters
Andrew Simpson on piano
Saturday November 8 at 4:00
The delicate story of cousins Lili Goldarbeiter and Marci Tänzer, both born in 1907 to a large middle-class Austro-Hungarian Jewish family, is retold largely through Marci’s home movies of her beloved Lili, whose rare to beauty pageant standard culminated in her crowning as the first Miss Universe. (Peter Forgács, 2006, digital beta, German with subtitles, 70 minutes)

Children of Divorce
Andrew Simpson on piano
Saturday November 8 at 4:00
The young and beautiful lovers Clara Bow and Gary Cooper are the lead players in an assignment that Sternberg salvaged and partly revised from another film originally meant for another direction. For Sternberg, Children of Divorce was his first major project for Paramount, the studio that ultimately released his most successful films (1927, 35 mm, silent with live accompaniment, 70 minutes)

Thunderbolt
Saturday November 15 at 12:30
Surprisingly full of delightful experimental touches and twists, Sternberg’s first talking picture is a gangster film that, wrote Andre Sarris, “is the stuff of grand opéra.” Among other enchantments, weary prisoners on death row harmonize blue songs and popular standards from their cells (1929, 35 mm, 95 minutes)

The Docks of New York
Donald Sonin on piano, Joanna Seaton vocals
Saturday November 29 at 4:00
Programmatically echoing Manhattan’s 1920s waterfront with beautifully rendered down-and-out denizens, The Docks of New York is an early gem. When a ship’s stoker (George Bancroft) saves a prostitute (Betty Compson) from drowning, his heroic deed becomes a deeply compassionate gesture. (1928, 35 mm, silent with live accompaniment, 96 minutes)

Josef von Sternberg, Master of Mood

Although Josef von Sternberg’s aura is often linked with actress Marlene Dietrich, this director’s relatively unknown early work was accomplished largely without the German diva. A six-film series includes two silent films that established his reputation as a poet of setting and mood. Special thanks to II Cinema Ritrovato, Bologna, Library of Congress, and to the UCLA Film and Television archive for 35 mm prints.

The docks of New York
Sunday November 30 at 4:30
An early and unusual collaboration with Marlene Dietrich, Diahoree is arguably the most beautiful Sternberg film after Morocco. Set in the director’s native Vienna, the story restructures the Mata Hari legend with the gloriously coiffed Charley lands in New York harbor. (Charles Chaplin, 1917, 35 mm, 30 minutes)

Dishonored
Sunday December 14 at 4:30
An early and unusual collaboration with Marlene Dietrich, Dishonred is arguably the most beautiful Sternberg film after Morocco. Set in the director’s native Vienna, the story restructures the Mata Hari legend with the gloriously coiffed Dietrich in the service of Austria mainly to unmask a Russian spy (Vorot McLegat). “The absurdities,” writes critic Raymond Durgnat, “make Sternberg one of the screen’s whittled pieces of ‘fame fou’.” (1928, 35 mm, 94 minutes)

Péter Forgács

The photographs, films, and media installations of Hungarian avant-garde artist Péter Forgács captivate with their unique combination of style and layered historical content. While his themes are not easy—family, war, philosophy, vanishing times and places—the films themselves are magical, constructing ephemeral spaces from amateur footage and forgotten texts. Forgács’ introductory lecture will be followed by three recent films.

Film, Memory, and Amnesia
Lecture by Péter Forgács
Sunday December 7 at 2:00
The love of ordinary Hungarians are exposed and examined in the work of media artist Péter Forgács. Through examples of forgotten home movies from the 1920s and 1930s that he has rescattered, Forgács discusses his unique approach to media and his development as an artist, while providing a general introduction to the films that follow. (Approximately 50 minutes)

Miss Universe of 1929
Sunday December 7 at 3:30
The Docks of New York
Saturday November 8 at 2:00
Josef von Sternberg’s first solo venture was an expressionistic tale of three drifters aboard a muddy dredge in the midst of a harbor. With its minuscule budget and immense artistic aspiration, critics dubbed the film “America’s first avant-garde feature.” “I had in mind a visual poem,” replied Von Sternberg. (1925, 35 mm, silent with live accompaniment, 79 minutes)

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In The Immigrant, Charlie Chaplin’s silent comic masterpiece, poor peasant Charlie lands in New York harbor. (Charles Chaplin, 1917, 35 mm, 30 minutes)

An American Tragedy
Sunday November 30 at 4:30
In Sternberg’s perceptive adaptation of Dreiser’s novel ("the understated opposite of George Stevens’ later version," writes historian Janet Bergstrom), Philip Holmes plays tragic hero Clyde Griffiths with an equal measure of self-doubt and determination. Lived up society’s ladder by roth débutante Sondra (Fenice Fox), he is undone by his destructive liaison with poor textile worker Roberto (Sylvia Sydney). (1931, 35 mm, 94 minutes)

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This program is made possible by funds given in memory of Rajiv Vaidya.
Poetically detailing the sensation of a near-fatal heart attack, Own Death is a Forgács’ first foray into fiction, based on Hungarian writer Péter Nádas’ biographical novella. A seemingly objective meditation on life is rendered subjective through Nádas’ first-person voiceover and Forgács’ use of rich evocative imagery. (Peter Forgács, 2007, digital beta, 118 minutes)

Tibor Höfler, last living member of the Hungarian leather manufacturing dynasty from Pécs, retells this family’s history through narrative, letters, photographs, and home movies. As personal stories unfold against pivotal moments in central European history, Tibor’s fate intertwines with that of Goethe’s young Werther, a character modeled on his own eighteenth-century ancestor Jakob von Höfler. (Peter Forgács, 2008, digital beta, Hungarian with subtitles, 160 minutes)

Noël Coward constructed a script from his own play for Lean’s first solo directing endeavor. Set in a suburban household in Clapham during the interwar years, Brief Encounter is a poignant homage to all the endearing family rituals deeply threatened during wartime. (1945, 35 mm, 114 minutes)

The early films of Sir David Lean (1908 – 1991) have been restored for his centennial by the British Film Institute National Archive, Granada International, and Studio Canal. Although Lean’s later 70 mm epics are generally better known, these films of the 1940s are so elegant and alive, so well written and constructed that, penned critic David Thomson, “they seem to love with the screen’s power.”

Great Expectations Sunday December 21 at 4:30

Professoring to take a backseat to Dickie, Lean took his cues from the novelist’s bold rendition for the film’s casting and sets. The Gothic atmosphere, vivid performances from John Mills, Valerie Hobson, and Alec Guinness among others, and exemplary editing and cinematography ensure Great Expectations’ survival as “the greatest of all Dickens’ films” (Roger Ebert). (1946, 35 mm, 118 minutes)

David Lean Restored

Rex Harrison as the cheerfully cynical novelist of Lean’s early Technicolor comedy (from a Noël Coward script) is hounded by the ghost of his first wife, an apparition awkwardly visible only to him. “One of the funniest British films ever made,” wrote a contemporary critic. (1945, 35 mm, 95 minutes)

The Passionate Friends Sunday December 28 at 4:30

Transposing Brief Encounter’s provincial setting and premise of adultery to London’s jet-set society, The Passionate Friends’ triangular tale (from an H.G. Wells novel) finds a woman torn between past and present when her old lover disrupts a holiday in Switzerland with her husband. “As ever, the craft of the piece carries the emotional subtlety” (Trevor Johnston). (1946, 35 mm, 95 minutes)

In Which We Serve Sunday December 20 at 2:00

One of four directing collaborations with Noël Coward, In Which We Serve was inspired by Lord Louis Mountbatten’s account of life on the destroyer HMS Kelly (Coward and Mountbatten were friends). Besides its accurate portrayal of Navy life, the film’s main fascination was mirroring the sharp class distinctions that exist on both ship and shore. (1942, 35 mm, 114 minutes)

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Short episode.

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Great Expectations Sunday December 21 at 4:30

Noël Coward constructed a script from his own play for Lean’s first solo directing endeavor. Set in a suburban household in Clapham during the interwar years, Brief Encounter is a poignant homage to all the endearing family rituals deeply threatened during wartime. (1945, 35 mm, 110 minutes)
An ongoing program of classic cinema, documentary, avant-garde, and area premieres occurs each weekend in the National Gallery’s East Building Auditorium, 4th Street at Constitution Avenue NW. Films are shown in original format. Programs are free of charge but seating is on a first-come, first-seated basis. Doors open approximately 30 minutes before each show. Programs are subject to change. For current information, visit our Web site: www.nga.gov/programs/film or call 202.842.6799.

**Oct**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
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<th>Event/Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>Film Indians Now! Pocahontas: Conversion</td>
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<td>SUN</td>
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<tr>
<td>WED</td>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>Event: Alvito Guicciardini, Eyes on the Horizon</td>
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<td>FRI</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>New Swiss Cinema: Hardcastle Chamber Music</td>
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<td>New Swiss Cinema: Maria Bellanca, Music for Perfumes</td>
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<td>Julia Dassin, Thedria</td>
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<td>Event: New Masters of European Cinema: Derinier maquis</td>
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<td>Event: New Short Films from Europe</td>
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<td>SAT</td>
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<td>Josef von Sternberg: The Salvation Hunters</td>
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<td>Josef von Sternberg: Children of Darkness</td>
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<td>SAT</td>
<td>6:30</td>
<td>Event: In the Land of the Headhunters</td>
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<td>SAT</td>
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<td>Josef von Sternberg: Thunderdrift</td>
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<td>SUN</td>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>Roman Ruins Rebuilt: Antony and Cleopatra</td>
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<td>SAT</td>
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<td>Event: Abel and Dorothy</td>
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<td>SAT</td>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>Film Indians Now! Films by Today’s Indians</td>
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<td>Roman Ruins Rebuilt: A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum</td>
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<td>Josef von Sternberg: The Docks of New York: The Immigrant</td>
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<td>Film Indians Now! The Godfather</td>
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<td>Peter Forgacs: Film, Memory, and Annwaa (lecture)</td>
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<td>Peter Forgacs: Miss Universe of 1909</td>
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<td>Peter Forgacs: Own Death</td>
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<td>Event: The Private Life of a Masterpiece: The Annunciation</td>
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<td>David Lean: Oliver Twist</td>
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**FALL08 NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART**