Films are shown in the East Building Auditorium.

Cover image from *Jolly Fellows* (Seagull)

Film Program Spring 2008
National Gallery of Art, Washington
## Spring Series

Jean Eustache: Film as Life, Life as Film

From the Archives: 16 at 12

Max Ophuls in Hollywood

Retour à May 1968

Envisioning Russia:

Mosfilm Studio

Gabriel Figueroa:

Master of Light and Shade

## Art Films and Events

I’ll Show You the Town

Ciné-Concert

Charly (Isild Le Besco in person)

In Praise of Independents:

The Flaherty

I Am a Cat (Tatsuya Nakadai in person)

Julius Caesar

## April

**3 Tues**

12:00: From the Archives: 16 at 12: The Happiness of Still Life

**5 Sat**

2:00: Jean Eustache: Le jardin des délices de Jérôme Bosch; La Cachon

4:00: Jean Eustache: Le jardin des délices de Jérôme Bosch; La Cachon

**6 Sun**

4:30: Jean Eustache: Les Photos d’Alizé: Le père Noël a les yeux bleus; Une sale histoire

**8 Tues**

12:00: From the Archives: 16 at 12: The Happiness of Still Life

**12 Sat**

2:00: Jean Eustache: The Mother and the Whore

**13 Sun**

6:30: Jean Eustache: Le poinçons perdus de Jean Eustache; Numéro zéro

**15 Tues**

12:00: From the Archives: 16 at 12: The Happiness of Still Life

**19 Sat**

2:00: Max Ophuls in Hollywood: The Exile

4:30: Max Ophuls in Hollywood: The Reckless Moment

**20 Sun**

4:30: Max Ophuls in Hollywood: Letter from an Unknown Woman

**22 Tues**

12:00: From the Archives: 16 at 12: The Happiness of Still Life

## May

**4 Sun**

4:30: Retour à May 1968: May Fools

**6 Tues**

12:00: From the Archives: 16 at 12: The Incised Image

**10 Sat**

2:00: Film Event: In Praise of Independents:

The Flaherty

**11 Sun**

5:00: Film Event: Charly (Isild Le Besco in person)

**13 Tues**

13:00: From the Archives: 16 at 12: The Incised Image

**17 Sat**

5:30: Retour à May 1968: Tout en bien

**18 Sun**

4:00: Retour à May 1968: Regular Lovers

**20 Tues**

12:00: From the Archives: 16 at 12: The Incised Image

**24 Sat**

2:00: Retour à May 1968: To Die at Thirty

4:30: Envisioning Russia: Bed and Sofa

**25 Sun**

5:45: Envisioning Russia: Battleship Potemkin

**27 Tues**

12:00: From the Archives: 16 at 12: The Incised Image

**31 Sat**

4:00: Envisioning Russia: Jolly Fellow

## June

**1 Sun**

4:30: Envisioning Russia: Tractor Drivers

**3 Tues**

12:00: From the Archives: 16 at 12: Glassmakers of Herat

**26 Sat**

4:00: Film Event: I’ll Show You the Town Ciné-Concert

**27 Sun**

4:30: Max Ophuls in Hollywood: Caught

**29 Tues**

12:00: From the Archives: 16 at 12: The Happiness of Still Life

**7 Sat**

2:00: Gabriel Figueroa: Master of Light and Shade; Enamorada

**8 Sun**

4:30: Envisioning Russia: The Thirteen

**14 Sat**

2:00: Gabriel Figueroa: Master of Light and Shade; Nazarin

**15 Sun**

4:00: Gabriel Figueroa: Master of Light and Shade; Another Dawn

**17 Tues**

12:00: From the Archives: 16 at 12: Glassmakers of Herat

**21 Sat**

2:00: Envisioning Russia: The Russian Question

4:00: Envisioning Russia: Carnival Night

**22 Sun**

5:00: Film Event: I Am a Cat (Tatsuya Nakadai in person)

**24 Tues**

12:00: From the Archives: 16 at 12: Glassmakers of Herat

**26 Thurs**

12:30: Film Event: Julius Caesar

27 Fri

12:30: Film Event: Julius Caesar

**28 Sat**

12:30: Film Event: Julius Caesar

3:00: Gabriel Figueroa: Master of Light and Shade; Moccasins; Days of Autumn

**29 Sun**

2:00: Envisioning Russia: The Crones Are Flying

4:30: Envisioning Russia: The Letter Never Sent

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 WEBSITE: WWW.NGA.GOV/FILM.HTM OR CALL (202) 842-6799.
Art Films and Events

I’ll Show You the Town Ciné-Concert
Premiere of new organ score by Dennis James
April 26 at 4:00
English comedic actor Reginald Denby resided in Hollywood when he was twenty-eight and immediately became a beloved star of many now-forgotten American comedies. In I’ll Show You the Town a young professor (Denny) is interrupted from his work on a book and becomes caught in a web of scandal and disgrace. Exorcising himself with some fast-talking and high-stepping, in the end he finds his true love. Detailed one reviewer in 1932, “This is a film where no one to keep a straight face.” (Harry A. Pollard, 1932, 35 mm, 102 minutes) Dennis James live on theater organ. Print from the Stanford Theatre Foundation Collection at UCLA Film Archive.

In Praise of Independents: The Flaherty
Washington premiere of
May 10 at 2:00
In Praise of Independents: The Flaherty brings together artists, filmmakers, writers, students, and scholars. Screenings will discuss the film after the screening.

I Am a Cat
Tatsuya Nakadai in person
June 22 at 5:00
One of the finest Hollywood studio renditions of Shakespeare, Joseph L. Mankiewicz’s Julius Caesar features not only a stellar cast—James Mason as Brutus, Marlon Brando as Mark Antony, and John Gielgud as Cassius to mention only three—but also a respectful and sensitive reading of the text that preserves the play’s dramatic rhythms. (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1953, 35 mm, 120 minutes) Presented in association with the Shakespeare Theater Company's stage production of Julius Caesar at the Harman Center for the Arts.

Jean Eustache: Film as Life, Life as Film
Untrained as a filmmaker but bold and original in approach, Jean Eustache (1938–1987) frequently called himself an archivist or ethnographer, not a filmmaker, even when talking about his dramatic work. “I simply want to show that the cinema has a direct influence on life, just as literature does.” He directed many films with an anthropological slant (some of them for French television) in which language and image shrewdly engage and challenge the viewer’s ideas about life.

Le Cochon (The Pig) preceded by Hieronymus Bosch’s Garden of Delights
April 5 at 2:00 and 4:00

Une sale histoire (A Nasty Tale) preceded by Les Photos d’Alix
and Le Pervers Noël a les yeux bleus (Santa Has Blue Eyes)
April 6 at 4:30

Elephant Boy, the classic film based on “Toomai of the Elephants” from Kipling’s The Jungle Book, features Sabu himself at the age of thirteen. Although seemingly about Sabu’s rite of passage to adulthood, the film touches on questions of myth and colonialism. (Robert Flaherty and Zoltan Korda, 1937, 35 mm, 80 minutes)

Charly
Washington premiere
Director Isild Le Besco in person
May 11 at 5:00
A fourteen-year-old Nicholas, a foster child uncomfortable with elderly guardians, steals a book and a postcard showing the sea at Belle-Île-en-Mer. He runs away, meets a young village prostitute called Charly, and experiences a rough coming-of-age. A fresh talent from France, Isild Le Besco (b. 1982) has directed four films and appeared in over thirty. Hailing from a long line of actors and filmmakers, she cast brother Kolia as young Nicholas and used brother known as her cinema- tographer. (Isild Le Besco, 2007, French with subtitles, 35 mm, 95 minutes) Isild Le Besco will discuss the film after the screening.

I Am a Cat
Tatsuya Nakadai in person
June 22 at 5:00
Natsume Sōseki’s satirical Japanese novel I Am a Cat spurred Kon Ichikawa to make a film version casting Tatsuya Nakadai in the starring role as a Tokyo teacher during the Meiji period. By turns maddic, meditative, and moving, the film follows not only the teacher’s comings and goings, but also the divergent affairs of the local cat population. Toward the end, the teacher’s cat politely shares his own perplexed opinion of his overseer and of humans in general. (Kon Ichikawa, 1979, Japanese with subtitles, 35 mm, 156 minutes)

Acteur Tatsuya Nakadai, legendary star of films by Akira Kurosawa, Masaki Kobayashi, Kon Ichikawa, and Mūkō Naruse, is rivaled in reputation only by the late Toshiro Mifune as Japan’s most iconic male star. One of the few actors known outside the country, Nakadai is also considered Japan’s leading Shakespearean actor and, at 77, remains one of its most popular stage stars. Immediately following I Am a Cat, Mr. Nakadai will appear in person for an on-stage interview with Japanese film specialist Michael Leck.

Je suis un chat... a poetic day in the life of a young man (who in fact is Eustache’s son) records an actress telling her life story to a camera operator. (Jean Eustache, 1978, French with subtitles, 28 minutes)
The Mother and the Whore
(La maman et la putain)
April 12 at 2:00
One of the monumental achievements of midcentury cinema (and “an icy comment on the French New Wave”), this nearly four-hour film puts a magnifying lens on the tangled relationships between a self-absorbed young Jean-Pierre Léaud and the women in his life. As the viewer observes daily comings and goings, monologues and dialogues (culled, according to the director, from real-life conversations) form a large part of the soundtrack. “The same way that Flaubert’s novels gave a reading of a personal trajectory as well as a tableau of an era, La maman et la putain offers a close up of three individuals, a medium shot of a micro-society, and a wide shot of French society in the early 1970s,” noted one writer. (Jean Eustache, 1973, French with subtitles, 35 mm, 220 minutes)

La peine perdue de Jean Eustache
(The Wasted Breath of Jean Eustache)
also Numéro zéro
April 13 at 4:30
Arguably one of the most intelligent biographies of a filmmaker ever produced, La peine perdue de Jean Eustache (The Wasted Breath of Jean Eustache) presents the artist through a series of interviews and readings by close friends and colleagues. Jean-Pierre Léaud leads the procession, reading a text by Eustache from 1971. Eustache’s revolutionary ideas about his art, his background, and the major events of his life (he committed suicide in 1981) are portrayed throughout the film. (Angel Díez, 1997, French with subtitles, 53 minutes) In Numéro zéro Eustache set out to make a portrait of his aged and nearly blind grandmother. He simply placed her in front of a camera and asked her to recount her life. This deceptively straightforward premise became a stirring portrait of a strong woman. Eustache never released Numéro zéro in its original format; instead, a truncated version was exhibited on French TV with the title Ôdette Robert. The longer original version was not released until 2003, nearly twenty years after the director’s death. (Jean Eustache, 1971/2003, French with subtitles, 35 mm, 104 minutes)

The Happiness of Still Life
April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
The Happiness of Still Life depicts Austria’s Biedermeier culture—the first fully-realized expression of an emerging middle class in Europe following the Napoleonic wars. With music by Franz Schubert and quotations from contemporary Austrian texts, the film is also a meditation on beautiful, simple objects: sewing boxes, friendship books, teacups, chairs, and lockets. (Andrea Simon, 1989, 16 mm, 17 minutes)

The Incised Image
May 6, 13, 20, 27
Australian artist Charles Lloyd, working in London in the early 1960s, explains his methods for etching on copper plates. The first part of the film is in black and white and features prints made with black ink, while the second part is in color and addresses color printmaking. (ArthurCantrill, 1966, 16 mm, 25 minutes)

Glassmakers of Herat
June 3, 10, 17, 24
In association with the exhibition Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul, The Glassmakers of Herat documents a one-room glass factory in Afghanistan that has retained production methods similar to those recorded on Assyrian cuneiform tablets 3,000 years ago. (EllisEwert, 1979, 16 mm, 26 minutes)

Max Ophuls in Hollywood

German-born, French-bred, Austrian-influenced Max Ophuls (1892–1957) flourished through a nomadic lifestyle that included turns in Italy, Holland, Switzerland, and the Soviet Union. In 1941 he arrived in California. His very first Hollywood assignment was a picture called Vendetta. Although that project in the end was a flop, Ophuls went on to direct four successful American movies before heading back to France in 1950, where he eventually achieved his most celebrated work. “This sense of ‘exile’ made the screen his only home,” wrote one historian. Ophuls’s camera, too, constantly traveled in tilts, pans, and a whole array of tracking and crane shots, seemingly never comfortable unless on the move.

The Exile
April 19 at 2:00
A vehicle for Douglas Fairbanks Jr. who, in the swashbuckling mode of his father, plays Charles 11 in exile in Holland, posing as a laborer and aiming to evade Cromwell’s puritanical Roundheads. “The result is a film whose athletic feats are in the camera’s realm, a Hollywood film with a European pace and Ophulsian grace that contemporary critics James Agee characterized as ‘cavalier detachment.’”— Pacific Film Archive (Max Ophuls, 1948, 35 mm, 95 minutes) Print from the Library of Congress collection

The Reckless Moment
April 19 at 4:30
“I never wanted to do a decent thing until I met you.” Blackmailer James Mason lowers the Squeeze on Joan Bennett, who has just dumped the body of her daughter’s disreputable boyfriend. The emotional intensity builds more from the bleakness of the everyday than from this touch of LA noir, however. Raising blackmail money is just another item on Bennett’s to-do list, along with the groceries, the mortgage, and the telephone bill. “Roving from room to room, tracked by Ophuls’s restless camera, Bennett is a prisoner in her open-plan home, a condition only sympathetic extortionist Mason seems to notice.” — Juliet Clark (Max Ophuls, 1949, 35 mm, 82 minutes)

Letter from an Unknown Woman
April 20 at 4:30
Louis Jouard, concert pianist turned playboy, opens a letter from recently deceased Joan Fontaine and, to his amazement, finds himself the object of a lifelong unrequited love. As Fontaine recounts their brief relationship, the film contrasts Jouard’s detachment with her very knowing assessment of their plight. “Her life was like the carnival ride that

From the Archives: 16 at 12
The Gallery continues its regular Tuesday at noon screenings of artist portraits and historical documentaries in archival 16 mm format. All prints are from the collection of the National Gallery’s film department.

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Max Ophuls with Jean Fontaine (Photofest)
took the couple, on their only night together, through the countries of Europe, a fantasy of movement that was really only a circular studied set. It was a period of student unrest, activism, boycott, rebellion, and mayhem that set off changes in French society later felt around the world. These four films evoke, in ways both reflective and raw, the exhilaration and remonstration that marked May 1968.

Envisioning Russia: Mosfilm Studio

The largest and most influential film studio in Russia, Mosfilm first opened its doors in Moscow in the early 1920s. From historical epics to musicals, propaganda films, and enduring classics by directors such as Sergei Bondarchuk’s monumental War and Peace, the most expensive film ever made, and Sergei Eisenstein’s Battleship Potemkin, arguably the greatest film of all time. A selection of ten Mosfilm archival features from the 1920s through the 1950s is presented in June. More films from the 1920s through the present day will be shown in July, concluding with the 2017 Moscow International Film Festival grand prize winner. Organized in association with Envisioning Russia curators Alla Verlotsky and Richard Pena.

Battleship Potemkin

May 25 at 5:45

A 1905 sailors’ revolt leads to repression and triumph in one of the genuinely excelling legends of the silent cinema. For many years routinely selected by critics’ polls as the greatest film of all time, Battleship Potemkin was at first planned as a sweeping overview of the entire 1905 revolution on its twelfth anniversary but weather and time constraints forced concentration on this single episode, comprising only a half page of the original script. The devastating Odessa steps sequence—arguably the most anthropologized scene in film history—required three days to conceive and seven to shoot using only real sailors and denizens of Odessa. “Pure propaganda, as much as it is art.” (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925, silent, with intertitles, 35 mm, 56 minutes)

May Fools (Milou en mai)

May 31 at 4:00

The most popular early sound films in Russia, as elsewhere, were often infused with national musical forms. The determined but untalented chanteuse of May Fools missteps into an innocent sheep for a renowned jazz band leader. She invites the shepherd to accompany her to a fancy fête. He agrees, but then shows up at the party with his pan-pipes—as well as all the animals from his farm. (Grigori Aleksandrov, 1934, Russian with subtitles, 35 mm, 56 minutes)

Retour à May 1968

This May marks the fortieth anniversary of the notorious “May ’68” social revolution in France. It was a period of student unrest, activism, boycott, rebellion, and mayhem that set off changes in French society later felt around the world. These four films evoke, in ways both reflective and raw, the exhilaration and remonstration that marked May 1968.

Tout va bien

May 17 at 3:00

Yves Montand and Jane Fonda, intellectuals committed to the 1968 revolution, find odd ideas thrown into question during a visit four years later to a worker-occupied factory. “A tasty force that presents a worker’s strike as a theater-of-cruelty exercise in proto-Marxist cant. . . another Godard masterstroke thanks to the referential, self-conscious presence of radical princess Fonda. . . . So fake it’s real to the touch, and mordantly funny.”—Michael Atkinson (Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin, French with subtitles, 35 mm, 95 minutes)

Regular Lovers (Les Amants réguliers)

May 18 at 4:00

Filmmaker Philippe Garrel was a participant in the May 1968 mutiny and (alongside Jean-Luc Godard and Claude Chabrol) produced footage of the revolution in progress. Decades later, Garrel recalls these experiences in his quasi-experimental Les Amants réguliers, a film that for its first hour portrays the May nocturnal street rebellions in stylized black and white. Police pursuit and a feeling of bourgeois world-weariness follow the fighting and euphoria, making the film “one-third idealism, two-thirds disillusionment—not unlike life itself.”—Dennis Lim (Philippe Garrel, 2005, French with subtitles, 35 mm, 175 minutes)

To Die at Thirty (Mourir à 30 ans)

May 24 at 2:00

Romain Goupil—student activist during the May 1968 protests and apprentice to Jean-Luc Godard—is among France’s most productive and politically engaged documentary filmmakers. His reflection fourteen years after the significance of May 1968 won the Festival de Cannes Camera d’Or and the French César for best first work. Goupil, who claims his only goal is “to communicate the existential issues that trouble (him),” raises many questions about the use of film as a medium to record history, even as he tells the story of this turbulent time. (Romain Goupil, 1982, French with subtitles, digital beta, 95 minutes)

The Thirteen

June 8 at 4:30

Heading home through the Central Asian desert, members of a thirteen-person patrol are harassed by a horde of marauding bandits. One of the earliest of the frontier adventure films known as “Easterns” (this one was not unlike life itself), a film that for its first hour portrays the fighting and euphoria, making the film “one-third idealism, two-thirds disillusionment—not unlike life itself.”—Dennis Lim (Philippe Garrel, 2005, French with subtitles, 35 mm, 95 minutes)

Bed and Sofa

May 23 at 4:30

A cool comedy of manners, Bed and Sofa satirizes everything from Moscow’s 1920s housing shortage to social problems between the sexes. “The director’s triumph was to balance precisely the tensions and tone of the situation —two men and one woman sharing a tiny flat. He was aided greatly by the delicacy of the playing and a wonder- fully cluttered, lived-in set.”—British Film Institute (Afram Room, 1937, silent, with intertitles, 35 mm, 80 minutes)

The New Moscow

June 14 at 4:00

“Little known even inside Russia, The New Moscow is an eye-popping amalgamation of country comedy, musical romance, and science fiction. A young designer working in Siberia comes up with a model that will allow the world to know how the capital city will appear in a future imagined by Stalin. He sets off for Moscow and is quickly overwhelmed by the city’s energy, enormity, and then-brand-new subway. . . Director Medvedkin’s missing of popular culture and avant-garde technique recalls an earlier period of Soviet life and politics, even as the film envisions an impossibly bright, technologically advanced future for
Some of the first cracks in the brick wall of Stalinist culture were caused by this witty send-up of bureaucracy, and a genuinely extraordinary masterwork. "My art has Mexicanidad." (Emilio Fernández, 1947, Spanish with subtitles, 35 mm, 94 minutes)

In the poverty-stricken backwoods of turn-of-the-century Mexico, priest Don Nazario's obssesive devotion to his own Christian principles produces calamity all around him. Figueroa's lens moves away from the imposing landscapes of his earlier work with Fernández, emphasizing instead the actors who, notes one critic, "constantly rearrange themselves in approximations of an early Renaissance triptych"—a typically ambiguous layout from Spanish surrealist Buñuel. (Luis Buñuel, 1958, Spanish with subtitles, 35 mm, 94 minutes)

Another Dawn (Distinto Amanecer) June 15 at 4:00
Distinto Amanecer's tale of labor union intrigue and corporate crime is set in the shadowy cabarets of Mexico City where Pedro Armandariz, haunted by sleazy government officials and aided by sultry Andrea Palma, probes the murder of a friend. Although usually associated with dramatic Mexican skies and rural landscapes, Figueroa was equally adept at capturing bright lights and dark alleys for the noirish melodramas of Mexico's golden age. (Julio Bracho, 1943, Spanish with subtitles, 35 mm, 108 minutes)

Macario also Days of Autumn (Días de Otoño) June 28 at 3:00
A short story by B. Traven lies at the heart of Macario, a mythical tale about a peasant's chance encounter with the Grim Reaper. When Death grants him magical healing powers, Macario is powerless to defend himself against the church and the local villagers who accuse him of heresy. Figueroa's chiaroscuro, suitably otherworldly, won an Oscar nomination for best cinematography. (Roberto Gavaldón, 1959, Spanish with subtitles, 35 mm, 51 minutes)

Director Gavaldón teamed up once more with Figueroa and the cast of Macario to make this graceful melodrama about a country girl (Pina Pellicer) who comes to Mexico City, finds work in a pastry shop, and builds a happy life. When her fiancé seemingly deserts her on their wedding day, her fantasies take over and mingle with fact (or perhaps fact was fantasy all along). Emotional moments are made memorable by Pelléier's intimate acting and by Figueroa's beautiful interiors and bright urban streets. (Roberto Gavaldón, 1962, Spanish with subtitles, 35 mm, 92 minutes)

The central cinematographer of Mexico's golden age of cinema, Gabriel Figueroa (1907–1997), played a key role in establishing the nation's visual heritage. A brilliant master of chiarascuro, he developed a unique style based on his principle of "curvilinear perspective" that merged the latest Hollywood technique with the pictorial art of Mexican muralists. Figueroa's commitment to Mexican national identity and his country's social issues remained firm: "My art has Mexican nationalism engraved everywhere." The Gallery's presentation of six restored 35 mm prints is made possible through the cooperation of Filmoteca de la UNAM. Special thanks to Ivan Trujillo, José Manuel Garcia, Linda Lilienfeld, and Pablo Gutierrez Píeiro.

Enamorada June 7 at 2:00
A remake of The Taming of the Shrew set in a Mexican village during the Juárez revolution, Enamorada glows with the radiant María Félix as the spoiled landowner's daughter and Pedro Armendáriz as her pursuer, General Reyes. Figueroa's cinematography is the focal point, capturing the village's churrigueresque cathedrals, the revolution's animated atmosphere, and, noted one writer, "an extreme close up of María's famously arched brow and moonlit eyes set into a landscape of Mexicanidad." (Emilio Fernández, 1946, Spanish with subtitles, 35 mm, 98 minutes)

The Letter Never Sent June 23 at 4:30
Hundreds of miles from nowhere in forsaken Siberia, a team of geologists (Russian superstars Inokenty Smoktunovsky, Tatiana Samoilovna, and Vasili Livarov among them) makes a diamond strike. As a harrowing man-against-wilderness epic, The Letter Never Sent is in a class by itself—the hair-raising high-light is a fast tracking shot through a forest fire, with flames seemingly inches from lens and actors. (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1959, Russian with subtitles, 35 mm, 97 minutes)

Gabriel Figueroa: Master of Light and Shade

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