Film Events

Figaros Hochzeit (The Marriage of Figaro)

Introduction by Harry Silverstein

Saturday April 17 at 1:00

The postwar German DEFA studio (Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft) produced a series of popular black-and-white opera films in the late 1940s at their Potsdam-Babelsberg facility. Mozart’s Figaros Hochzeit, the first of these, featured wonderfully airy sets and costumes. (Ewing Wildhagen, 1949, 35 mm, German with subtitles, 109 minutes) Presented in association with Washington National Opera.

Flamenco at the Source

Screening and discussion with Brook Zern

Sunday April 18 at 4:30

Flamenco scholar Brook Zern presents segments from the renowned Rite y Geografía del Cante Flamenco— the vast ethnographic documentation of flamenco, completed in Spain forty years ago, and featuring legendary traditions of the diversity of flamenco song, from alegrías, malagueñas, granaínas and rito y flamenco scholar Brook Zern presents segments from the renowned Rite y Geografía del Cante Flamenco— the vast ethnographic documentation of flamenco, completed in Spain forty years ago, and featuring legendary traditions of the diversity of flamenco song, from alegrías, malagueñas, granaínas and cante jondo. (José Luis Guerín, 2001, 35 mm, Spanish and Catalan with subtitles, 109 minutes) Presented in association with Washington National Opera.

Battle of Wills

Introduction by Anne Henderson

Friday April 23 at 1:00

Convinced he owns the only portrait of Shakespeare painted from life, Cana Vázquez hoy rediscovers a fortune trying to prove his point. Battle of Wills moves from conservation labs in North America to galleries on Manhattan in 16 mm. “An allegory for the effects that globalization has had on society and landscape”—Rotterdam Film Festival. (Redmond Entwistle, 2009, HD-Cam, 52 minutes)

New Masters of European Cinema:

En construcción (Work in Progress)

José Luis Guerín in person

Saturday June 5 at 2:30

One of the most adventurous talents in European cinema is the Catalan filmmaker José Luis Guerín. Almost a decade ago he completed En construcción, a film that plays with the layered ambiguities of the visual world. Guerín’s subject, the construction of an upscale condominium in a marginal Barcelona neighborhood, allows him to reflect on his own ideas about history and perception, “spinning a spellbinder from the simplest elements”—Harvard Film Archive. (José Luis Guerín, 2001, 35 mm, Spanish and Catalan with subtitles, 125 minutes)

De Wilde Swener (The Wild Swans)

American premiere

Sunday June 6 at 4:30

H. R. Giger, one of Switzerland’s most renowned architects, has created a modernist time capsule for the 21st century. His designs are the subject of H. R. Giger: Birthing Places. The first of his projects to be inhabited by the public will be the Swiss national museum of art in the extension of the Kunstmuseum Basel. Giger’s first project for the country was the Swiss Parliament (1980). (Total running time 85 minutes)

Monuments: Matta-Clark, Graham, Smithson

Redmond Entwistle in person

Saturday June 19 at 2:00

A clever and amusing critique of three minimalist, Monuments portrays a problem that emerges in the work of Robert Smithson, Gordon Matta-Clark, and Dan Graham, as each artist retraces his relationship to New Jersey. “An allegory for the effects that globalization has had on society and landscape”—Rotterdam Film Festival. (Redmond Entwistle, 2009, 16 mm, 30 minutes)

From Ecstasy to Rapture: A Journey through Spanish Experimental Film

An unprecedented retrospective of Spanish avant-garde cinema of the last fifty years. From Ecstasy to Rapture consists of six programs arranged by theme and technique, in archival prints and preservation video transfers. Presented as part of the Preview Spain: Arts & Culture ‘10 program and through the cooperation of the Embassy of Spain, Spain–USA Foundation, and Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona. Special thanks to Francisco Tardío Bazán and curators Mònica Poyet and Andres Hispano. Sound films are subtitled in English.

Documents/History/ideas

Saturday April 3 at 2:00

A program of shorts and installations including the work of visionary filmmakers José Val del Omar and José-Luis Guerín,architect Gabriel Blanco, and artists Benet Rosell, Antoni Miralda, and Virginia García del Pino. (Total running time 70 minutes)

Appropriations/Grand Super-8

Saturday April 3 at 4:00

An eclectic mix of Super-8 mm shorts and 16 mm found-footage films (transferred to video) contrasts the work of film artists from divergent generations: the 1970s avant-garde and younger filmmakers active during the last decade. Included are works by Toni Serra, Jesús Pérez-Miranda, Eugeni Bonet, Marcel Pay, Luis Cervera, Juan Bufill, Lope Serrano Srl, Maximiliano Viale, Olivi Sánchez, Manuel Huerca, and others. (Total running time 70 minutes)

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The only feature in the history of Spanish cinema constructed entirely by the cinema of Catalunya (Catalonia) on a painter’s Mediterranean coast is a milestone: the topic of Andalusian migration to the north would have been marginalized by the Franco regime. Artists include Blanca Casas Brullet, Gonzalo de Pedro, Jorge Cosmen, and Carles Durán. (Total running time 70 minutes)

Report on the Revolutionary Movement in Barcelona followed by El alegra paralelo (The Jolly Parallels)
Saturday May 15 at 4:30
The first newsreel of the Civil War, shot entirely by anarchists, July 19 to 23, 1936, exposes the street fighting, the barricades, the ruined convents, and the quarter’s insane excitement. (Enric Ripoll-Freixes and Josep Maria Ramon, 1944, digital beta, Spanish and Catalan with subtitles, 32 minutes)

A journey through the incredible life of Elena Dimitrievna Diakonova Gala from her Russian birthplace, to Paris and first husband Paul Éluard, then on to France where she met Salvador Dalí. Gala presents as subject only as muse to many artists but also as a complex personality. (Silvia Munt, 2002, 35 mm, Catalan, Spanish, English, and French with subtitles, 105 minutes)

In a village on the trendy Costa Brava, a laborer ends his day carousing. At the same time in Andalucía, his wife and family begin a one-way journey to join him. Combining many issues in a beautifully layered narrative, La vieja quemaða is a milestone: the topic of Andalusian migration to the north would not be treated again in the cinema until 2003. (Josep Maria Font, 1945, 35 mm, Catalan and Spanish with subtitles, 104 minutes)

On the Revolutionary Movement in Barcelona followed by El alegra paralelo (The Jolly Parallels)
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The first newsreel of the Civil War, shot entirely by anarchists, July 19 to 23, 1936, exposes the street fighting, the barricades, the ruined convents, and the quarter’s insane excitement. (Enric Ripoll-Freixes and Josep Maria Ramon, 1944, digital beta, Spanish and Catalan with subtitles, 32 minutes)

A cinematography that our own domestic output seldom manages.” — Donald Levit. (Marc Recha, 1985, 35 mm, Catalan with subtitles, 104 minutes)

A rehearsal of the Cherry Tree.
Saturday May 1 at 2:00
In a forgotten village at the end of the twentieth century, a small boy learns the subtler lessons of life. Marc Beleta crafts a tale in a meditative, minimalist style, taking the boy’s point of view to construct a tale about relationships, loss, death, and the pulse of the natural world.” (Gently celebratory, of a sort that our own domestic output seldom manages.” — Donald Levit. (Marc Recha, 1998, 35 mm, Catalan and Spanish with subtitles, 94 minutes)

A film as a vehicle for baritone Marcos Redondo, an aria that plays a journey through the incredible life of Elena Dimitrievna Diakonova Gala from her Russian birthplace, to Paris and first husband Paul Éluard, then on to France where she met Salvador Dalí. Gala presents as subject only as muse to many artists but also as a complex personality. (Silvia Munt, 2002, 35 mm, Catalan, Spanish, English, and French with subtitles, 105 minutes)

With thanks to pragda, Mariona Bruzzo, José Calle Buendía, Laida Ustenfeld, Mary Barron, and Ronald Sadoff. Poem of Place
Adapting a celebrated 1962 novel by Catalan writer and midcentury intellectual Josép Calle Buendía, linda lilienfeld, Mary Baron, and ronald sadoff. Poetry of Place

In a village on the trendy Costa Brava, a laborer ends his day carousing. At the same time in Andalucía, his wife and family begin a one-way journey to join him. Combining many issues in a beautifully layered narrative, la vieja quemaða is a milestone: the topic of Andalusian migration to the north would not be treated again in the cinema until 2003. (Josep Maria Font, 1945, 35 mm, Catalan and Spanish with subtitles, 104 minutes)

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Still Voices, Inner Lives: The Journals of Alain Cavalier

French director Alain Cavalier (b. 1931), once assistant to Louis Malle, found his favorite filmic métier in the journal—essayistic daybooks filled with notes and observations, the camera turned on himself and the things around him. At times Cavalier’s journals are lyrically trans- parent, at other times blindly down to earth. Visually, each journal is a meditative still life of forms and objectsoking the randomness and fragility of everyday life. Special thanks to Antoine Sabine, Kathy Geritz, Jake Pavlo, and Francois Widhoff.

Yves (Lives)
Saturday April 17 at 3:30
Sketches from the lives of four very different workers (a surgeon, a sculptor, a butcher, and a former assistant to Orson Welles) form a mosaic poetically plumbing the meaning of the word “vocation.” In the final segment, at a house in France where Orson Welles once worked, Cavalier explores the director’s left behind (2003, 35 mm, French with subtitles, 87 minutes).

Irène
Sunday April 25 at 4:30
Cavalier finds pages from a diary composed when his first wife, actress Irène Tunc, died in a car crash. Still trying to come to terms with the tragedy, he follows a new voiceover dialogue creating an intimate portrait of a life shared by a man and a woman. (1997, video transferred to 35 mm, French with subtitles, 75 minutes).

Le Filmeur
Saturday May 1 at 4:00
Always experimenting, Cavalier obsessively records his own life over a period of eleven years. Moments with second wife Françoise mingle with scenes of his aging parents, his own battle with skin cancer, and footage of birds and other small creatures who wander into view. “A string of thought-provoking episodes tracking the ordinary life, made unordinary in the telling and adorned to various effects.”—Derek Malcolm. (2009, 35 mm, French with subtitles, 85 minutes).

La Rencontre (The Meeting)
followed by Lettre d’Alain Cavalier
Sunday May 2 at 4:30
A man records to record with his camera the first year of a new relationship. Always experimenting, Cavalier obsessively records his own life over a period of eleven years. Moments with second wife Françoise mingle with scenes of his aging parents, his own battle with skin cancer, and footage of birds and other small creatures who wander into view. “A string of thought-provoking episodes tracking the ordinary life, made unordinary in the telling and adorned to various effects.”—Derek Malcolm. (2009, 35 mm, French with subtitles, 85 minutes).

Portraits d’Alain Cavalier
Friday May 21 at 1:00
Five vignettes from Cavalier’s series of twenty-four studies of women and their lives. Each sketch is a beautiful miniature, poetically rendering a life’s work with a few well-chosen flourishes”—Steve Said. (1988–1992, 16 mm, French with subtitles, 55 minutes).

Moving Compositions: Aspects of Chopin

Emblematic of Poland but alas of the Romantic era, Fryderyk Fran- ciszek Chopin remains an icon to artists and audiences alike. Polish poet Cyprian Norwid best described the composer as “born a Varso- vien, his heart Polish, his talent a citizen of the world.” In honor of the bicentennial of Chopin’s birth, this series explores the ways in which the music and the man have been celebrated, codified, and used to influence various movements. Organized in collaboration with Filmatka Narodowa, Warsaw and TV Studio Filmow Animowanych, Poznan. Special thanks to Malgorzata Markowska, Kinga Karbowniczek, Marcin Gizycki, the Polish Cultural Institute, the Andrzej Markowski Foundation, and the Embassy of the Republic of Poland.

Experiment, Music, and Chopin in Polish Cinema
Introduction by Marcin Gizycki
Sunday May 9 at 4:30
The experimental film practice of artists Franciszka and Stefan Themerson began in Poland and continued unabated after their emigration to London in 1940. Both they and their colleague Eugeniusz Celakowski explored new ways of working with montage and sound, utilizing Chopin’s compositions to the fullest. Three restored shorts include: Calling Mr Smith/ Franciszka and Stefan Themerson, 1943; Colour Studies of Chopin (Eugeniusz Celakowski, 1944); and Zalazowa Wola (Eugeniusz Celakowski, 1948). A beautifully imagined film about the influence of his music. (Total running time 52 minutes).

The Heart and Soul of Warsaw
Saturday May 15 at 2:00
The collection of rare shorts connects Chopin to Warsaw and includes Ballade for violin (Andrzej Parulski, 1945), a bird’s-eye documentation of a devastated city; the newer Chopin’s Heart Returns to Warsaw (1949); Born in Warsaw (Maria Karbowiecka, 1996), surveying Poland’s annual International Chopin Piano Competition; and Chopin’s Heart (Marian Markowska, 2004), produced for Frontline. (Total running time 86 minutes).

The Youth of Chopin (Młodość Chopina)
Saturday May 22 at 4:00
Produced during the Stalinist regime, Ford’s feature imagines young Chopin as an idealistic student, intent on social as well as cultural revolution. Czarelaw Wolski’s perfect as the composer, fragrant, passionate, and agonized. Per- formances are by Halina Czerny-Stefańska, winner of the 1949 International Chopin Piano Competition, and violist Wanda Wilkomirska. (Alexander Ford, 1951, 35 mm, Polish with subtitles, 121 minutes) Presented in association with the Washington Chopin Festival and Andrzej Markowski Foundation.
Beat Memories

Musicians, filmmakers, playwrights, poets, painters, and protesters are the focus of this series presented in association with the National Gallery exhibition Beat Memories: The Photographs of Allen Ginsberg.

The Savage Eye
Saturday June 12 at 2:30
A new restoration of an American landmark, The Savage Eye was assembled in part from a collection of clips from late 1950s America, woven together with a poetic narrative about a down-and-out divorcée (Barbara Basile) seeking a fresh start in California. (Ben Maddow, Joseph Strick, Sidney Meyers, and Haskell Wexler, 1958, 35 mm, 68 minutes) Print restored by, and courtesy of, the Academy Film Archive.

The Balcony
Presented by Muscle Beach
Saturday June 12 at 4:00
Joseph Strick and Ben Maddow’s arresting adaptation of Jean Genet’s The Balcony, made on a shoestring, finds Shelley Winters, Peter Falk, Leonard Nimoy, and Lee Grant leading a first-rate cast. As uprisings rage in the streets, action inside a Brechtian-style brothel reveals that human relationships have been reduced to disengaged performance. (Joseph Strick, 1963, 35 mm, 84 minutes) Strick’s early short Muscle Beach casts a detached but genial eye at the regulars who populate the sands of Santa Monica, to the accompaniment of Earl Robinson’s blues (Joseph Strick and Irving Leiner, 1948, 35 mm, 9 minutes).

Falling Stars
Friday June 18 at 1:00
City Lights Bookstore in San Francisco, center of the universe since 1953 for poets and writers, is the focus of Christopher Felver’s new portrait of Lawrence Ferlinghetti. His Pocket Poets Series, an early venture, published Allen Ginsberg’s Howl and Other Poems in 1956. (Christopher Felver, 2009) HD-Cam, 82 minutes.

A Song to Remember
Saturday May 29 at 1:00
Charles Vidor’s melodrama portrays Chopin (Cornel Wilde) as a sensitive mind thwarted by a patriotic support of an independent Poland, until George Sand (Mia Farrow) devotes him to her cause. With piano performances by José Iturbi, this rarely screened biopic offers an account of the composer’s life in mid-nineteenth-century society across Poland, France, and Majorca. (Charles Vidor, 1945, 35 mm, 113 minutes)

Cecil Taylor: All the Notes
Friday June 18 at 3:00
Friday June 25 at 3:00
A free jazz pioneer and master of complex improvisation, Cecil Taylor shares insights, anecdotes, and glimpses, captivating the viewer in this documentary portrait assembled from rare and old footage and concert sequences. (Christopher Felver, 2004) digital beta, 73 minutes

Pull My Daisy
Saturday June 26 at 2:00
A celebration of Kerouac’s “childhood holy land,” Lowell Blues remembers the place the writer could never forget. Excerpts from Doctor Sax are read by Gregory Corso, Johnny Depp, Carolin Cassidy, David Amram, and others. (Henry Ferrini, 2001) digital beta, 26 minutes

Pull My Daisy: Conversations in Vermont
Saturday June 20 at 2:00
Pull My Daisy is the quintessential beat memory, an improvisational scene from an unproduced play by Jack Kerouac, shot in a Greenwich Village apartment populated with Robert Frank’s friends and acquaintances, including son Pablo (Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie, 1959, 35 mm, 30 minutes) A decade later, Robert Frank made the vast and autobiographical Conversations in Vermont. His children Pablo and Andrea, now teenagers, are interrogated by Frank about their former life in New York versus their new life in Vermont. (Robert Frank, 1969, 16 mm, 26 minutes)

Polls Is This: Charles Olson and the Persistence of Place
Saturday June 26 at 4:00
Jonas Mekias’ first narrative is a madcap journal of 1950s Beat life, a modish view of existential despair in the life of Barbara (Frances Stillman) and Gregory (Adullia Mekias). The couple is befriended by the seemingly happy Ben (Ben Carruthers) and Argus (Argus Carruthers) while improptu poetry readings provide the counterpoint. (Jonas Mekias, 1962, 16 mm, 75 minutes)

What Happened to Kerouac?
Sunday June 27 at 2:00
Kerouac’s legendary appearances on NBC’s The Steve Allen Show are counterbalanced by commentary from friends and clips from home movies in this famous chronicle of the poet who was at the center of the Beat ethos. (Richard Lerner and Lewis Maldamus, 1966, 96 minutes) Courtesy of Reserve Film and Video Collection, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Patti Smith: Dream of Life
preceded by Lang for the City
Stephen Sabring in person
Saturday June 27 at 4:30
For eleven years, photographer-filmmaker Stephen Sabring recorded mammoth amounts of footage of singer, songwriter, poet, and Beat follower Patti Smith. Dream of Life, true to its title, is easy and diffused as Smith visits the burial places of favorite poets Rimbaud, Burroughs, and Ginsberg, finds friends, recollects her life, pursues her political aims, and performs. (Stephen Sabring, 2004, 35 mm, 109 minutes) In-Long for the City Patti Smith recites two works and roams around her New York neighborhood, noting the changes that are taking hold. (Jim Cohen, 2008) digital beta, 10 minutes
An ongoing program of classic cinema, documentary, avant-garde, and area film premieres occurs each weekend in the National Gallery’s East Building Auditorium, Fourth Street at Pennsylvania Avenue NW. Films are shown in their original formats. Programs are free of charge but seating is on a first-come, first-seated basis. Doors open approximately thirty minutes before each show. Programs are subject to change. For more information, visit our Web site at www.nga.gov/programs/film or call (202) 842-6799.

The spring season features film series and events that celebrate a range of cultures, from Danish to Catalan, as well as a variety of art forms. The film retrospective From Ecstasy to Rapture: A Journey through Spanish Experimental Film and series Catalunya: Poetry of Place include several Washington premieres of historic and contemporary works of Spanish origin; Still Voices, Inner Lives: The Journals of Alain Cavalier offers some of the filmmaker’s most revealing and intimate life studies; Moving Compositions: Aspects of Chopin marks the bicentennial of composer Frédéric Chopin’s birth with screenings of classic features, avant-garde shorts, and nonfiction films; and Beat Memories is an assortment of films by and about famous members of poet Allen Ginsberg’s circle. Special events also include Flamenco scholar Brook Zern presenting excerpts from a vast ethnographic documentation of the art form and a Washington premiere of a Danish adaptation (with royal connections) of a Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale. Finally, the Gallery continues its seasonal series of ciné-concerts with J’Accuse and New Masters of European Cinema with Catalan filmmaker José Luis Guerín in person.

FILM

Apr

3 SAT 2:00 From Ecstasy to Rapture: A Journey through Spanish Experimental Film Documents/Itineraries
4 SUN 4:00 Catalunya: Poetry of Place: La lluna del diumenge, Barcelona, Terra de Meditacion: Familia
9 Fri 2:30 From Ecstasy to Rapture: A Journey through Spanish Experimental Film Movement/Painting
10 SAT 2:00 From Ecstasy to Rapture: A Journey through Spanish Experimental Film Animated Experimentation. Rhythm, Light, Color, Investigations/Metacinema
11 SUN 4:30 Catalunya: Poetry of Place: La Senda
17 SAT 1:00 Film Event: Turgenev Revisited
18 SUN 4:30 Film Event: Flamenco at the Source
23 Fri 1:00 Film Event: Battle of Wits
24 SAT 3:30 Catalunya: Poetry of Place: Cine-Concert: Plays y Costa Brava, Electric Hotel, Gent i passeig de Catalunya
25 SUN 4:30 Still Voices, Inner Lives: The Journals of Alain Cavalier

May

1 SAT 2:00 Catalunya: Poetry of Place: Lletres de les cierres
4 SUN 4:00 Still Voices, Inner Lives: The Journals of Alain Cavalier: Le Filmez
8 SAT 4:30 Still Voices, Inner Lives: The Journals of Alain Cavalier: La Remordia, Cena de miarle temps: Alain Cavalier
9 SAT 3:30 Catalunya: Poetry of Place: Coca-Cola
15 SAT 1:00 Moving Compositions: Aspects of Chopin: The Heart and Soul of Warsaw
4:30 Catalunya: Poetry of Place: Report on the Revolutionary Movement in Barcelona, El alzaro paralelo
16 SUN 4:30 Catalunya: Poetry of Place: Le pal quemado
21 Fri 1:00 Still Voices, Inner Lives: The Journals of Alain Cavalier: Portraits of Alain Cavalier
22 SAT 2:00 Catalunya: Poetry of Place: La Fandangada
4:00 Moving Compositions: Aspects of Chopin: The Youth of Chopin
23 SUN 4:30 Catalunya: Poetry of Place: Loque d’elles amateurs
29 SAT 1:00 Moving Compositions: Aspects of Chopin: A Song to Remember
3:30 Moving Compositions: Aspects of Chopin: From Sound Chopin in Recent Film and Video
30 SAT 4:30 Still Voices, Inner Lives: The Journals of Alain Cavalier: Théandres: Le trente d’Alain Cavalier

Jun

5 SAT 2:30 Film Event: New Masters of European Cinema: En construcción
6 SUN 4:30 Film Event: De Chocolate
12 SAT 2:30 Beat Memories: The Savage Eye
4:00 Beat Memories: Muscle Beach: The Balcony
13 SUN 4:30 Catalunya: Poetry of Place: Mandatana, The Silence before Bach
18 Fri 3:00 Beat Memories: Perughi
19 SAT 2:30 Film Event: Monuments: Math/Clark, Graham, Smithson
3:30 Film Event: Manhattan in 3½ min.
20 SUN 2:00 Beat Memories: Pull My Daisy: Conversations in Vermont
4:30 Film Event: Cine-Concert: J’Accuse
25 Fri 1:00 Beat Memories: Perughi
3:00 Beat Memories: Cecil Taylor: All the Notes
26 SAT 2:00 Beat Memories: Lowell Blues: Poles Is This: Charles Olson and the Persistence of Place
4:00 Beat Memories: Guns of the Trees
27 SUN 4:30 Beat Memories: What Happened to Kerouac?
4:30 Beat Memories: Patti Smith: Dream of Life, Long for the City