WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU SEE

HOMAGE TO MERCE CUNNINGHAM

CELEBRATING CHEKHOV ON THE RUSSIAN SCREEN

PELESHIAN: POET OF THE CINEMA

IN PRAISE OF INDEPENDENTS: THE FLAHERTY SALUTE TO THE FILM FOUNDATION

national gallery of art
winter
film
4th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC

Mailing address:
2000B South Club Drive
Landover, MD 20785
Film Events

Process in Time: Shorts by Richard Serra
Introduction by Kimberley Pacic
Saturday January 2 at 2:00

A collection of silent shorts by Serra, including his first work in film, Hand Catching Lead (1968), points out the artist’s interest in steel as a medium and in 16 mm film as a means of expressive analysis. Hands Scraping (1968), Frame (1969), Railroad Trombone (1976), and Steelmill (Staalwerk) (1979) are also on the program. (Total running time 40 minutes)

15 Days of Dance:
The Making of Ghost Light: Day 3, Morning
Elliot Caplan and Brian Reeder in person
Washington premiere
Sunday January 3 at 4:30

Films about ballet typically document performance—but 15 Days of Dance defines the journey, the ordeal of rehearsals and discourses, travelled by American Ballet Theater choreographer Brian Reeder and his dancers en route to the final rendition of Ghost Light. The first of two substantial excerpts from this monumental eighteen-hour film commissioned by the Center of the Moving Image at the University of Buffalo. 15 Days of Dance is presented in association with American Ballet Theater. (Elliot Caplan, 2009, HDCam, 71 minutes)

Ciné-Concert:
Lady of the Pavements
Donald Sosin and Joanna Seaton in person
Saturday January 9 at 2:00

An original score for piano and voice, performed by composer Donald Sosin and vocalist Joanna Seaton, accompanies D.W. Griffith’s luminous Lady of the Pavements. Loosely based on a Karl Gustav Vollmoeller novella about a Prussian aristocrat in Paris tricked into marrying a prostitute, Griffith’s final film of the silent era features William Boyd playing opposite Lupe Velez, then Hollywood’s new discovery. (D.W. Griffith, 1929, 35 mm, 80 minutes)

International Festival of Films on Art
Sunday January 10 at 4:00
Saturday January 16 at 12:30

Award winners from the 2009 edition of the celebrated International Festival of Films on Art, an annual event in Montreal now in its twenty-eighth year, are screened on successive weekends.

- On Sunday, January 10 at 4:00, Zora Neale Hurston: Jump at the Sun (Saleel Thaddious, 90 minutes) precedes Karin in History (Joseph Hillel, 52 minutes) and Anthony Caro: La sculpture comme religion (Alain Fleischer, 90 minutes).
- On Saturday, January 16 at 12:30, Otto Dix Opera House (Anne Andersen, 59 minutes) precedes Born Rhythm (Aliona van der Horst, 57 minutes) and Solo—Bogulíva Schaffer (Maciej Piasieki, 55 minutes).

- 15 Days of Dance:
The Making of Ghost Light: Day 8, Evening
Elliot Caplan and American Ballet Theater dancers in person
Washington premiere
Sunday January 31 at 4:30

Day 8. Evening from Elliot Caplan’s extraordinary 15 Days of Dance documen- tary is followed by a discussion with Caplan and two dancers from American Ballet Theater. Meticulously recording the process of creating a new ballet through the interactions of dancers and choreographer, the film becomes “an extended rumination on the making of art”—Ann Murphy. (Elliot Caplan, 2009, HD Cam, 60 minutes)

Henry V
Sunday February 7 at 4:30

One of two cinematic adaptations of Shakespeare’s last major history play (Laurence Olivier’s 1944 rendering is the other), Kenneth Branagh’s robust restaging is brilliant and balanced—even, on occasion, flashing back to Henry V for context. Single-handedly reviving popular interest in reading Shakespeare, “Branagh’s production was in many ways a calculated inversion of [Olivier’s] earlier film, not just retaining but even emphasizing the ambiguities that Olivier deliberately removed”—British Film Institute. (Kenneth Branagh, 1989, 35 mm, 137 minutes)

Agnès Varda: Short Films
Saturday February 13 at 3:30

Celebrated French director, nouvelle vague forerunner, and current Academy Award nominee Agnès Varda has produced a collection of provocative short films during the course of a long career. Routinely connected to her own life history, Varda’s shorts view the world through a wise and meandering mind. The program ranges from L’Opéra mouffe and Du côté de la côte to Black Panther (1968) to The So-called Cynathlete (1984), with many forays in between. (Total running time 120 minutes)

Love Letters and Live Wires
England’s GPO Film Unit in the 1930s
Sunday February 14 at 4:30

“If you want to see what camera and sound can really do,” wrote J. B. Priestley, “you have to see some little film sponsored by the Post Office.” Public service shorts by England’s legendary GPO Film Unit, all from the British Film Insti- tute’s archival collection, include It’s a Life (1947), Love on the Wing (Norman McLaren, 1936), The Fairy of the Phone (Basil Wright and William Coldstream, 1936), The Tocher (Lotte Reiniger, 1938), and others. (Total running time 80 minutes)
A series of rare and remarkable documentaries from the 1960s and 1970s, presented in association with The Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection: Selected Works, is inspired by Frank Stella’s famous comment, “What you see is what you see.”

Painters Painting
Saturday January 2 at 4:00
Emile de Antonio’s classic portrait of the New York art world of the late 1960s, long unavailable, has been restored in a digital version. Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Barnett Newman, Henry Geldzahler, Frank Stella, Robert Soul, and many others are spontaneously captured on film, prompting one New York Times reviewer at the time to quip that “what you see is like being at a cocktail party.” (Emile de Antonio, 1973, digital beta, 116 minutes)

Jasper Johns followed by Barnett Newman
Thursday January 7 and Friday January 8 at 12:30
Conversations with Jasper Johns at home in North Carolina and in his New York studio, a discussion with gallery owner Leo Castelli, and glimpses of Johns in lithographer Tatiana Grosman’s workshop are contained in this 1960s portrait. (Lane Slate for NET, 1966, 16 mm, 30 minutes)

Barnett Newman is interviewed about his landmark series Stations of the Cross in the Manhattan studios of National Educational Television. (Lane Slate, 1966, 16 mm, 30 minutes)

New Abstraction: Morris Louis/Kenneth Noland
followed by New Abstraction: Frank Stella/Larry Poons
Thursday January 14 and Friday January 15 at 12:30
Reflections on Morris Louis with key figures in his life including painter Helen Frankenthaler, wife Marcella Breuer, and critic Clement Greenberg are followed by Kenneth Noland’s discussion of Louis and the development of his own painting practice. (Lane Slate, 1966, 16 mm, 30 minutes)

Conversations with Stella and Poons, still in their twenties, reveal the young artists’ discipline and dedication to “getting down to what you need, rather than what you want” in a painting. (Lane Slate, 1966, 16 mm, 30 minutes)

Jasper Johns: Take an Object
Sunday January 21 and Friday January 22 at 12:30
Color footage of the artist at work with lithography plates is accompanied by excerpts from Johns’ writings, read by composer and colleague John Cage. (Hans Namuth and Judith Washcov, 1990, 16 mm, 30 minutes)

The Joseph Albers Archive shares his perspective on repetition, color, and form while former students, including Robert Rauschenberg, speak of his influence as a teacher. (Hans Namuth and Paul Falkenberg, 1970, 16 mm, 25 minutes)

Homage to Merce Cunningham
A film and video tribute to the late cultural icon and choreographer Merce Cunningham (1919–2009)—legendary dancer and “the bolshoi of his generation”—includes onstage discussions with filmmaker Elliot Caplan and media historian John Hanhardt.

Cage/Cunningham
Elliot Caplan in person
Sunday January 3 at 2:00
Elliot Caplan’s dual portrait of John Cage and Merce Cunningham reflects not only the intricate partnership between these two icons, but also the filmmaker’s very personal relationship to his subjects. (Elliot Caplan, 1991, BetaSP, 95 minutes)

Merce by Merce by Paik, Parts I and II
followed by Walkaround Time
Introduction by John Hanhardt
Saturday January 1 at 9:00
Cunningham collaborated with artists throughout his career—composer John Cage and visual artists including Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Nam June Paik. Merce by Merce by Paik consists of Blue Stuf, Five Seg- ments, a short video dance by Cunningham and his filmmaker in residence at the time, Charles Atlas, and Merce and Marcel, a densely textured collage. (Nam June Paik, Charles Atlas, and Shigeko Kubota, 1978, BetaSP, 29 minutes).

Walkaround Time documents a single act choreographed by Cunningham with a set designed by Jasper Johns after Marcel Duchamp’s The Large Glass. (Charles Atlas, 1973, 16 mm, 48 minutes)

What You See
Is What You See
Celebrating Chekhov on the Russian Screen

Anton Chekhov wrote his four principal plays during cinema's first decade, 1895 to 1905. To mark the 150th anniversary of the eminent Russian writer's birth in January 1860, the National Gallery is pleased to present seven Russian film adaptations of Chekhov's short stories and plays. The program is presented in association with Seagull Films, New York, and Mosfilm, Moscow, with special thanks to Peter Rolberg, Karen Shakhnazarov, Alla Verlatsky, and the Trust for Mutual Understanding.

Saturday January 16 at 4:00

Invited to the estate of Anna Petrovna for a pastoral retreat, former lovers Sofia and Misha meet again — but for the first time in this fashionable milieu. Their former passion, they discover, is merely a passing fancy. The camera, a calm omniscient visitor to the country dacha, placing Chekhov's characters that include Innokenti Smoktunovsky as Vanya and Sergei Bondarchuk as Dr. Astrov. “If the film begins with brutal realism, it ends with a soaring love story,” says Karen Shakhnazarov in person. (Karen Shakhnazarov, 2009, 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 83 minutes)

Saturday January 30 at 2:30

The Seagull

By Peter Rolberg

Saturday February 6 at 6:30

Chekhovian Motifs

Saturday February 13 at 12:30

Kira Muratova's avant-garde approach to Chekhov—combining themes from the one-act play Tatiana Repina (1889) and short story Difficult People (1886)—transfers the action to contemporary post-Soviet times. Exploiting the sinister side of familial and social relationships in a small Russian village, the film “pushes Muratova's style to the extreme, following the entire process of a Russsian Orthodox marriage in real time... she seems to be making a statement about the trivialization of spirituality” —RUSSIAN JOURNAL. (Irina Muratova, 2002, digital beta transfer from 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 89 minutes)

Pelesian: Poet of the Cinema

Artavazd Pelesian, Armenia's distinguished cinematic poet, is rooted in the history of his homeland yet universal in his reach. During a long career that began in the Soviet period, Peleshian—who developed his own distinctive style for assembling and scoring his material—has crafted a body of iconic cinematic short essays that study the spiritual aspects of nature, history, and human life. Similar to his friend Sergei Paradjanov, Peleshian (b. 1938) —“a master of montage and his descendant of Vertov and Eisenstein” (Pacific Film Archive)—is a national treasure in Armenia and unlike any other filmmaker. Special thanks to Maril Karapetyan, Kinoproekt, Alla Kogan, and the Harvard Film Archive.

Uncle Vanya

Saturday January 23 at 2:30

Chekhov's dramatic tour de force of frustrated longing in a family about to break apart was adapted for cinema by Andrei Konchalovsky with his gifted cast that included Innokenti Smoktunovsky as Vanya and Sergei Bondarchuk as Dr. Astrov. “If the film begins with brutal realism, it ends with a soaring camera, a calm omniscient visitor to the country dacha, placing Chekhov's idyl rich and the starving masses outside the frame”—ALBERT JOHNSON. (Andrei Konchalovsky, 1970, 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 104 minutes)

A Hunting Accident (My Loving and Tender Beast)

Sunday January 24 at 4:30

Emil Loteanu's hunting adaptation of Chekhov's The Shooting Party—with its exotic aura and sensatious plot—created uproar in literature and film circles on its release. “To be sure, The Shooting Party was a curiosity in Chekhov's oeuvre, his only completed novel and a mystery thriller at that. Although Chekhov's authorship of the story was firmly established, it is revealing that he did not include it in any of his collected works... writing it, more than likely, to earn money”—Peter Rolberg. (Emil Loteanu, 1978, 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 109 minutes)

The Lady with the Dog

Introduction by Peter Rolberg

Saturday February 2 at 12:30

A Moscow banker (Aleksei Batalov) and a young woman (Iya Sawina) meet and fall in love on holiday in Yalta but are reluctant to give up their lives at home with respective spouses. This gentle, wistful tale—filmed fifty years ago and with thoughtful insight—is a beloved Chekhov adaptation and, in the words of one reviewer, “a rich period portrait and brilliant study of passion deferred” (Josef Kwinski, 1961, 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 89 minutes)

Ward No. Six

Washington premiere
Karen Shakhnazarov in person
Sunday January 17 at 5:00

Provincial asylum director Andrey Ragn becomes an inmate in his own medical ward in this updating of Chekhov's classic story Ward No. Six. The doctor's gradual psychological disintegration in this present-day telling stems from the ill of a newly materialistic, narcissistastic society. For Chekhov, that estrangement was a metaphor for loss of faith in the promise of science. For Chekhov, the writer's nineteenth-century society “engaged in endless conversation that covers up its innermost, self-pitying paralysis”—Peter Rolberg. (Nikita Mikhalkov, 1977, 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 100 minutes)
A tale of modern values, human dignity tied to work and productivity, and

The Flaherty

The Seasons

the Chickens (al-Dajaj)

the Seasons

the Beginning

16 minutes)

The program concludes with 

The End

the flaherty Seminar, the celebrated annual critical forum for filmmakers,

In Praise of Independents:

Kristallnacht

In Praise of Independents:

Wedding of Silence

In Praise of Independents:

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The Flaherty Seminar, the celebrated annual critical forum for filmmakers, artists, students, and scholars now in its fifty-fifth year, was named for the great American maverick filmmaker Robert Flaherty. The National Gallery salutes this annual event with a two-day selection of works from the 2009 seminar. “Witnesses, Monuments, Ruins.” Special thanks to Linda Litskenfeld, Mary Baron, and Mary Kerr.

Wedding of Silence

followed by White Sky

Saturday February 27 at 2:00

Wedding of Silence’s vignettes from inside a St. Petersburg community por-

tray daily life among neighbors who live, literally, in silence—men do not hear the din of their foundry and women do not hear their children. Yet, their lives are as rich and vibrant as lives anywhere in the city. (Pavel Medvedev, 2003, 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 28 minutes)

White Sky’s focus is the life of a family in the Russian city of Monchengorak, home to a large nickel plant and one of the world’s most polluted towns.

“A tale of modern values, human dignity tied to work and productivity, and our ability to accept environmental risks as an inevitable part of life”— États

généraux du film documentaire. (Susanna Helke and Virpi Suutari, 1998, 35 mm, Russian with subtitles, 34 minutes)

The Chickens (al-Dajaj)

Wednesday February 23 at 2:45

An artist’s poetic tribute to the “sanctity of the human spirit,” Kristallnacht was dedicated to the memory of Anne Frank. (Chick Strand, 1979, 16 mm, 7 minutes)

As a moving work of mordant social commentary, The Chickens—produced by Sony’s state television as an official policies were starting to favor industrial production over the cottage trades—ostensibly shows the new chicken-farming industry in a village in the steppe. (Omar Amiralay, 1977, 16 mm transfer to digital beta, subtitles, 40 minutes)

In Flaherty and Film ethnographer Robert Gardner interviews Francis Flaherty (widow of Robert) about her husband’s working methods and, in particular, his difficulties in filming Moana in the 1920s. (NET, 1960, 16 mm, 16 minutes)

Sweetgrass

Washington premiere

Sunday February 28 at 4:30

Documenting the life and labor of Montana’s shepherding Aalstaf famil-

y—the last of its kind, recorded film & Taconic lending was coming to an end—the filmmaker eschewed any voiceover commentary in favor of a considered observational style. Spectacular beauty, irony, adversity, and human endeavor are brought into play as Sweetgrass journeys deep into a world governed by ritual, tradition, and nature itself. (Ilsa Barabash and Lucien Castang-Taylor, 2009, 35 mm, 105 minutes)

Salute to The Film Foundation at Twenty

The Film Foundation is the key nonprofit organization in America dedi-

cated to preserving our collective motion picture heritage through partnerships with major film archives (Academy Film Archive, Anthology Film Archives, George Eastman House, Library of Congress, Museum of Modern Art, UCLA Film & Television Archive, and the National Film Pres-

ervation Foundation). Founded in 1990 by Martin Scorcese and a group of prominent filmmakers, The Film Foundation has identified and funded the preservation and restoration of over 350 motion pictures. Together with American Express, the foundation presents the Preservation Screen-

ing Program to bring these restored films to cities and festivals across North America. The National Gallery is pleased to salute the foundation’s accomplishments on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary year.

Drums Along the Mohawk

Saturday March 13 at 1:30

John Ford’s first color film, inspired by Walter D. Edmonds’ historical novel, portrays settlers on New York’s eighteenth-century frontier through a remark-

able roster of actors headed by Henry Fonda and Claire Benton. The commanding “display of Ford’s skill” (Jean-Loup Bourget) was restored by the Academy Film Archive in cooperation with Twentieth Century Fox, with fund-

ing provided by The Film Foundation. (John Ford, 1939, 35 mm, 105 minutes)

The Red Shoes

Sunday March 14 at 4:30

Originally released in the late 1940s, this most beloved of all ballet movies required three years to restore. Weaving together the tragic tale of a deter-

mined young dancer (Moira Shearer) with that of the Hans Christian Andersen story, The Red Shoes is “the most dazzling flight of fantasy in Powell and Pressburger’s career, and scarcely matched in the British cinema”—British Film Institute. Restored by UCLA Film & Television Archive in association with British Film Institute, The Film Foundation, ITV Global Entertainment Ltd., and Janus Films with funding from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, The Film Foundation, and the Louis B. Mayer Foundation. (Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1948, 35 mm, 133 minutes)

Senso

Sunday March 28 at 4:30

The Film Foundation joined several European agencies (including StudioCanal, Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia-Cineteca Nazionale, and Cineteca di Bologna-Ummaghe Ritrovata to restore one of Luchino Visconti’s most treasured works set during the Risorgimento. With its unforgettable opening sequence in Venice’s La Fenice, Senso stars Alida Valli and Farley Granger as the famous lovers whose ill-fated passion destroys itself in a world that is fading away. Funding provided by Gucci, The Film Foundation, and Comitato Italia 150 (Luchino Visconti, 1945, 35 mm, Italian with subtitles, 123 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-served 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 winter season features the Washington premiere of Elliott Caplan’s new documentary 15 Days of Dance: The Making of Ghost Light as well as a two-part tribute to choreographer and cultural icon Merce Cunningham, who died last year. Celebrating Chekhov on the Russian Screen, a series of filmic adaptations coinciding with the sesquicentennial of the famed writer’s birth, opens with the Washington premiere of Ward No. Six. Russia’s nominee for this year’s Best Foreign Language Film Oscar. Peleshi: Poet of the Cinema is a retrospective of the work of Armenia’s distinguished experimental filmmaker fervently championed by Jean-Luc Godard. Salute to The Film Foundation at Twenty honors this key organization dedicated to restoring motion picture history with three brilliant restorations. Finally, the flaherty Seminar fervently championed by Jean-Luc Godard. Salute to the film foundation at twenty is a retrospective of the work of Armenia’s distinguished experimental filmmaker Poet of the Cinema premieres of Ward no. Six, adaptations coinciding with the sesquicentennial of the famed writer’s birth, opens with the Washington premiere of Ward No. Six, Russia’s nominee for this year’s Best Foreign Language Film Oscar. Peleshi: Poem of the Cinema is a retrospective of the work of Armenia’s distinguished experimental filmmaker fervently championed by Jean-Luc Godard. Salute to The Film Foundation at Twenty honors this key organization dedicated to restoring motion picture history with three brilliant restorations. Finally, the Gallery continues its seasonal series of ciné-concerts, New Masters of European Cinema, and salutes to the Flaherty Seminar and International Festival of Films on Art.

### January

**2**<br>**SAT** 2:00 Film Event Short Films by Richard Serra<br>4:00 What You See Is What You See: Painters Painting<br>**3**<br>**SUN** 2:00 Homage to Merce Cunningham: Cage/Cunningham<br>4:30 Film Event 15 Days of Dance: The Making of Ghost Light: Day 3, Morning<br>**7**<br>**THURS** 12:30 What You See Is What You See: Jasper Johns: Barnett Newman<br>**8**<br>**FRI** 12:30 What You See Is What You See: Jasper Johns: Barnett Newman<br>**9**<br>**SAT** 2:00 Film Event ciné-concert: Lady of the Pavements<br>4:00 Homage to Merce Cunningham: Merce by Merce by Paik, Walkaround Time<br>**10**<br>**SUN** 4:00 Film Event International Festival of Films on Art

### February

**6**<br>**SAT** 12:30 Celebrating Chekhov on the Russian Screen: The Lady with the Dog<br>**8**<br>**SUN** 4:30 Film Event Henry V<br>**13**<br>**SAT** 12:30 Celebrating Chekhov on the Russian Screen: Chakhovskaya Motifs<br>3:30 Film Event: Agnès Varda: Short Films<br>**14**<br>**SUN** 4:30 Film Event: Love Letters and Love: America’s UFO Film Unit<br>4:00 Film Event: Festival of New French Shorts<br>**20**<br>**SAT** 2:30 Peleshi: Poet of the Cinema: The Beginning, We, The Moribund, Life<br>**24**<br>**SAT** 4:30 Celebrating Chekhov on the Russian Screen: A Hunting Accident<br>**30**<br>**SAT** 2:30 Celebrating Chekhov on the Russian Screen: The Seagull<br>**31**<br>**SUN** 4:30 Film Event 15 Days of Dance: The Making of Ghost Light: Day 9, Evening

### March

**6**<br>**SAT** 2:00 Film Event: The Black Maria: Selections from the Festival<br>**7**<br>**SUN** 4:30 Film Event: New Masters of European Cinema: Everlasting Moments, Pause in the Marshland<br>**13**<br>**SAT** 2:00 Salute to The Film Foundation at Twenty: Drums Along the Mohawk<br>**14**<br>**SUN** 4:30 Salute to The Film Foundation at Twenty: The Red Shoes<br>**20**<br>**SAT** 2:00 Film Event: Araya<br>4:00 Film Event: Araya<br>**21**<br>**SUN** 4:30 Film Event: Home<br>**27**<br>**SAT** 2:00 Salute to The Film Foundation at Twenty: The Red Shoes<br>**28**<br>**SUN** 4:30 Salute to The Film Foundation at Twenty: The Red Shoes