

A black and white photograph of a man and a woman crouching outdoors. The man is shirtless and looking off to the side with a serious expression. The woman is wearing a dark top and looking towards the camera. They are surrounded by natural elements like branches and foliage.

Film

Summer 2018
National Gallery of Art



Summer 2018

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Summer film season at the National Gallery of Art opens July 1 with *Wild Strawberries*, part of the *Ingmar Bergman Centennial*, a retrospective of the Swedish auteur's early works from the 1940s and 1950s. On September 2 Bergman scholar Jan Holmberg, curator and head of the Ingmar Bergman Foundation and Archives in Stockholm, discusses Bergman's oeuvre and introduces the rarely screened 1950 *This Can't Happen Here*. The *Bergman Centennial* also includes his later films, showing at the American Film Institute as well as House of Sweden in Washington. *From Vault to Screen* comprises highlights from the biennial UCLA Festival of Preservation, which celebrates recently restored 35mm prints from the vaults of the UCLA Film & Television Archive. The series includes films by the pioneering American independent Juleen Compton. *Jacques Becker: Poet of the Commonplace* re-examines the work of a now overlooked French postwar master who was once admired and advocated by the young filmmakers of the French New Wave. *Black Maria: Selections from the Festival* returns with a selection of award-winning short films from the most recent Black Maria competition. Special events this summer include many delights: a reprise of Harry Dean Stanton's final film *Lucky*, a ciné-concert featuring new musical scores inspired by the stately independent works of Peter Hutton, a lecture on Stanley Kubrick by historian Robert Kolker, and the Washington premieres of João Moreira Salles's *In the Intense Now* and Alanis Obomsawin's *Our People Will Be Healed*.

Films are shown in the East Building Auditorium, in original formats whenever possible. Seating for all events is on a first-come, first-seated basis unless otherwise noted. Doors open thirty minutes before showtime. For more information, visit nga.gov/film, email film-department@nga.gov, or call (202) 842-6799.

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September

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Special Events

Jul 7 – Sep 30

Lucky

Sat Jul 7 (4:30)

Having outlasted all his friends and relatives in a tiny, south-western desert town, the cheekily independent nonagenarian Lucky (Harry Dean Stanton in his final role) finds himself staring into the abyss, and not liking it much. Actor John Carroll Lynch's directorial debut is, on one level, an amalgam of shots that track Lucky's daily routines and coffee-shop conversations with the locals (distinctively portrayed by David Lynch, Ed Begley Jr., Tom Skerritt, and Beth Grant, among others) but the observations that seep through are surprising. "Everything Stanton has done has brought him to his moment of triumph in *Lucky*, an unassumingly wonderful little film about nothing in particular and everything that's important" — Joe Leydon. (John Carroll Lynch, 2017, 88 minutes)

Ciné-concert: Films of Peter Hutton

Chris Brokaw and Matthew Nolan in performance

Sat Sep 1 (2:30)

Guitarists and composers Matthew Nolan and Chris Brokaw have crafted new musical scores for a selection of works by American filmmaker Peter Hutton (1944 – 2016), whose evocative short films of landscapes and cityscapes, often in black and white, were made without sound. Hutton likened his films to paintings and described the experience of viewing them as "a little like daydreaming." The films — *Florence*, *In Titan's Goblet*, *Study of a River*, *New York Portrait*, *Chapter One*, and more — move between their original soundless state and live accompaniment. "The fact that these films were deliberately created without a soundtrack is intriguing to those of us interested in sound and its role in narrative — and inspires questions worth exploring" — Chris Brokaw. (Total running time approximately 90 minutes) *With special thanks to Culture Ireland for support of Matthew Nolan*

Alanis Obomsawin

Our People Will Be Healed, 2017

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Stanley Kubrick: The Irony of Feeling

Robert Kolker, lecturer

Sun Sep 2 (2:00)

The cinema of Stanley Kubrick is occasionally criticized as cold or distant. The images and the stories his films tell, however, speak to a deeply held and ironically expressed passion, a level of feeling that the viewer has to seek out or be open to. This lecture is illustrated by numerous clips from Kubrick's films. Interestingly, his work frequently references specific works of art. Following the lecture is a book signing of Robert Kolker's *The Extraordinary Image: Orson Welles, Alfred Hitchcock, Stanley Kubrick, and the Reimagining of Cinema*. (60 minutes)

In the Intense Now

Washington premiere

Introduced by Michael Kraus

Sat Sep 29 (2:30)

João Moreira Salles's new cine-essay combines anonymous archival footage and reflective voice-over to survey the societal chaos of the late 1960s. More importantly, however, *In the Intense Now* is a poetic experiment in the communication between personal history and global events, as Salles mixes tourist footage recorded by his own mother on her trip to China at the start of the 1966 Cultural Revolution with found footage of rebellion from May 1968 recorded in France, Czechoslovakia, and Brazil. As Salles himself states: "We don't always know what we're filming." "An ode to inadvertent cinematic archives, which harbor the gift of accidental revelation" — Diego Semerene. (João Moreira Salles, 2017, subtitles, 127 minutes)

Our People Will Be Healed

Washington premiere

Alanis Obomsawin in person

Sun Sep 30 (4:00)

Celebrated Abenaki cinéaste Alanis Obomsawin (born 1932) went from performance and storytelling to filmmaking in the 1970s. *Our People Will Be Healed*—a multilayered portrait of Norway House Cree Nation, one of the largest First

Nation communities in Manitoba with a rich historical legacy dating from the early nineteenth century — is her most recent feature. With an emphasis on self-reliance and sustainable development, Norway House is now a base for community-run industries, though a legacy of colonial policies and earlier ordeals is deeply felt. Through interviews and local landscape footage, Obomsawin represents this vibrant place in all its complexity and splendor. (Alanis Obomsawin, 2017, 97 minutes).

Ingmar Bergman Centennial

Jul 1 – Sep 3

Any assessment of the enduring legacy of Ingmar Bergman (1918 – 2007) should cite not only his landmark late films, but also his early work, broad formal range and expressionistic visual style, devotion to theater and music, and especially his gift for working with an ensemble of actors who routinely probe complex issues of morality, death, and faith. The National Gallery of Art, together with the American Film Institute, the Embassy of Sweden, and the Swedish Film Institute, is pleased to present this retrospective on the occasion of Bergman's centenary. The Gallery's focus is his early work of the 1940s and 1950s, while later films are screened at the AFI Silver Theatre. Special exhibitions and documentaries are shown at the Embassy of Sweden. Thanks to Janus Film, the Ingmar Bergman Foundation, the Swedish Film Institute, and to Kajsa Hedström, Jan Holmberg, and Brian Belovarac. The Gallery's series includes both 35mm prints and new digital restorations.

Wild Strawberries

Sun Jul 1 (4:00)

Ingmar Bergman cast his friend and mentor Victor Sjöström as a distinguished older professor revisiting, in flashback, the experiences of a long life. While traveling with his daughter-in-law (Ingrid Thulin) to Lund, where he will receive an honorary degree, the professor returns in reverie to his youth, pays a visit to his aged mother, picks up a hitchhiker (Bibi Andersson) who resembles a former lover, and undergoes a fantasy inquisition. (1957, 35mm, subtitles, 90 minutes)

Frenzy (Torment)

Sat Jul 7 (12:30)

Charting the ill-fated romance between painfully adolescent Jan-Erik (Alf Kjellin) and older, alcoholic widow-turned-hooker Bertha (Mai Zetterling), whose lover is Jan-Erik's sadistic Latin teacher "Caligula," the expressionistic *Frenzy* was an early, credited screenwriting effort of a twenty-five-year-old Bergman. *Frenzy* became a major success internationally for Bergman's mentor Alf Sjöberg, who, like Bergman, had been immersed in the theater. "A masterful film, beautifully acted" — Elliott Stein. (Alf Sjöberg, 1944, 95 minutes)

Crisis

Sat Jul 7 (2:30)

Bergman's directorial debut (he also wrote the screenplay) bears traces of his life in the theater. Based on the radio play *The Maternal Instinct (Moderhjetet)* by Leck Fischer, *Crisis* delves into the emotional states of five characters. The action centers on a young woman called Nelly, who, in the midst of a quiet, small-town home life with a foster mother, is retrieved by her biological mother who wants her in Stockholm. Though the film invites parallels with Bergman's later work, the director once recalled: "I knew nothing... and felt like a crazy cat in a ball of yarn." (1945, subtitles, 93 minutes)

It Rains on Our Love

Sun Jul 8 (4:00)

Two strangers with troubled pasts (Birger Malmsten and Barbro Kollberg) meet in a train station, spend a night together,



and decide to start a new life, but their idyll is interrupted when they are forced to confront the coldly repressive society around them. In the mode of the French poetic realist films of the late 1930s, the lighthearted moments in *It Rains on Our Love* alternate with bursts of despair. (1946, subtitles, 95 minutes)

A Ship to India

Sat Jul 14 (2:00)

Birger Malmsten flashes back to an O'Neill-esque, fractured *ménage à quatre* with the bad memories he harbors for his sea captain father's abusive conduct toward the family and the love he himself holds for his father's mistress. Bergman's first foreign exposure, screening at Cannes and then opening in New York, also holds many delights. "The atmosphere Bergman creates on the waterfront, intentionally reminiscent of Marcel Carné's French films, led André Bazin to enthuse about this film's 'world of blinding cinematic purity'" — Mark Sandberg. (1947, subtitles, 98 minutes)

Music in Darkness

Sat Jul 14 (4:00)

When aspiring pianist Bengt is blinded in an accident, he loses the familiar comforts of his life. Despite his anguish, music restores him, bringing him closer to the lower-class Ingrid (Mai Zetterling). "Bergman and brilliant black-and-white cinematographer Göran Strindberg (grandson of playwright August) collaborate on dark, shadowy images that constantly remind us of Bengt's blindness. Whether seen as a subtextual mirror-image for Bergman's own life, or just an intimate portrait of a strong character, this is a touching piece of film that stands firmly as proof of the constant quality of Bergman" — Dennis Grunes. (1948, subtitles, 87 minutes)

Port of Call

Sun Jul 15 (4:00)

"Rossellini's spirit pervades this gritty waterfront drama, which gave Bergman his first box-office success. It also marked his earliest collaboration with longtime cinematographer Gunnar Fischer and caused a stir abroad with its frank discussion of maternal cruelty, premarital sex, and abortion.



Bergman devoted as much time to capturing the atmosphere of Gothenburg's docks and factories as he did the hesitant romance between working-class waif Nine-Christine Jönsson and Bengt Eklund, the sailor who had thwarted her suicide bid. Seven decades on, this retains a noirish potency" — British Film Institute. (1948, subtitles, 100 minutes)

Thirst (Three Strange Loves)

followed by Prison

Sun Jul 22 (4:00)

The rarely screened *Thirst*, an early Bergman milestone, was one of the first works to demonstrate his trademark delving into the human spirit. Adapted from short stories by actress Birgit Tengroth (who also plays Viola in the film), the plot follows a failing marriage but focuses principally on the inner torments of a trio of female characters damaged by past liaisons. (1949, subtitles, 88 minutes)

In *Prison*, Bergman advanced an argument on morality and faith, "yet, he was restricted by a shoestring budget and tight schedule that prompted him to follow Hitchcock's example in *Rope* (1948) of shooting in long takes. Editor Lennart Wallén had a key role, most notably during a slapstick film-within-a-film and a nightmare sequence lit with expressionist menace by Göran Strindberg. Truly a harbinger of things to come" — British Film Institute. (1949, subtitles, 79 minutes)

To Joy

Sat Jul 28 (2:00)

To Joy borrows its title from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Set in a musical milieu, the young hero's ambitions as a violin soloist for a provincial orchestra fail to synchronize with his romantic involvements. Victor Sjöström shines as the orchestra's genial conductor. "Instances of honesty, and a touching but unrequited love, to magnificent music. I would not want to not have made it" — Ingmar Bergman. (1950, subtitles, 98 minutes)

Summer Interlude

Sat Jul 28 (4:00)

A ballet dancer recalls a relationship she once had during an idyllic Swedish summer and the poignant aftermath of her

Ingmar Bergman

Sawdust and Tinsel (The Naked Night), 1953

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loss of this love. Bergman based the film on his own early love affair. “*Summer Interlude* was close to my heart for a long time. I felt that this was the first time the medium obeyed me, and my love seemed requited. I happened to see the film a couple of weeks ago. I found it... amateurish with some short instances of truth and decency” — Ingmar Bergman. (1951, subtitles, 96 minutes)

Secrets of Women (Waiting Women)

Sun Jul 29 (4:00)

In a summer house in the Stockholm archipelago, three wives recount an adventure from their marriages while awaiting their husbands' return: Anita Björk's dalliance with old flame Jarl Kulle; Maj-Britt Nilsson's impressionistically rendered remembrances of a Paris affair; and battling couple Eva Dahlbeck and Gunnar Björnstrand's romance rekindled when stuck in an elevator overnight. Ranked Best Swedish film of 1952/1953 in a critics' poll. (1952, subtitles, 107 minutes)

Sawdust and Tinsel (The Naked Night)

Sat Aug 4 (2:00)

As an itinerant circus rolls through the countryside in turn-of-the-century Sweden, a coach driver recounts to owner Albert (Åke Grönberg) a tale of lurid humiliation from long ago: Frost the clown (Anders Ek) must retrieve his naked wife before a crowd of leering, jeering soldiers, the only sound a relentless drumbeat. Later Albert finds himself reliving the episode within his own circus ring. Despite the dour conditions, *Sawdust and Tinsel* is “visually a treat, with Bergman's richly baroque compositions brilliantly exploiting the circus and theater setting” — Tom Milne. (1953, subtitles, 96 minutes)

Lesson in Love

Sat Aug 4 (4:00)

Gynecologist Gunnar Björnstrand dallies with a patient, while his wife (Eva Dahlbeck) runs off in retaliation for a fling with her old flame (Åke Grönberg). With enchanted musings about the past revealed in flashback, *Lesson in Love's* more whimsical passages include confusion as to who is married to whom and a deus-ex-machina Eros figure who delivers a “do

Ingmar Bergman

It Rains on Our Love, 1946

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not disturb" sign to a hotel room door. "Foreshadowing both *Wild Strawberries* and *Smiles of a Summer Night*, the actors play cheerfully across all lines and shadings of conflict in the knowledge, no doubt, that for their director, conflict is the law of life" — Arlene Croce. (1954, subtitles, 96 minutes)

Summer with Monika

Sun Aug 5 (4:00)

The sensual, young, and freethinking Monika escapes with her new lover to the Swedish Archipelago, where the two spend the summer in a fragile idyll that eventually ends in loss of innocence and painful resignation. A quintessential work of Bergman's early career, *Summer with Monika* fixed the director's focus on a female perspective and themes of escape and concession that would distinguish much of his later work. (1953, 35mm, subtitles, 96 minutes)

Dreams

Sun Aug 12 (4:00)

Set in Gothenburg where the famous wooden roller coaster of Liseberg Park provides an emblematic backdrop, *Dreams* spans twenty-four hours in the lives of two women (fashion mogul Eva Dahlbeck and model Harriet Andersson) at different points in their relationships with men. "Bergman uses his cinema of reflection — the self and the other are met and merged in mirrors, windows — to show love as a function of projection: only desire, never its object, is worthy of the effort" — Bergman Archives. (1955, subtitles, 88 minutes)

The Magician

Introduced by Peter Rollberg

Sat Aug 18 (3:30)

In the mid-nineteenth century, mute mesmerist Albert Vogler (Max von Sydow), on the road with his Dr. Vogler's Magnetic Health Theatre troupe, is detained at Consul Erland Josephson's home. After a performance Vogler is subjected to a grueling probe from rationalist doctor Gunnar Björnstrand. With its O. Henry-like surprise ending, *The Magician* is both a tale of suspense and a metaphor for the artist's plight. (1958, 35mm, subtitles, 101 minutes)

Smiles of a Summer Night

Sun Aug 19 (4:00)

Bergman's romantic midsummer's roundelay at a fin de siècle house party has famously inspired creative artists from Woody Allen to Stephen Sondheim. The women guests cleverly conspire against the men, forcing their hands in matters of love while exposing the men's ails and anxieties. With its stellar cast of Bergman regulars, *Smiles of a Summer Night* is not only one of the great works of cinema, it also became Bergman's first big international success. "An elegy to transient love—a gust of wind and the whole vision may drift away"—Pauline Kael. (1955, 35mm, subtitles, 110 minutes)

This Can't Happen Here (High Tension)

Introduced by Jan Holmberg

Sun Sep 2 (4:30)

A rarely-shown oddity in Bergman's oeuvre, *This Can't Happen Here* was undertaken at the behest of Svensk Filmindustri—their goal was to produce a profitable international spy thriller. The scenario involves an agent known as Atkä Natas from a despotic country called Liquidatzia. The agent's estranged wife, Vera, a scientist, is engaged with exiles attempting to smuggle refugees out of the troubled homeland. Conspiracy, collusion, attempted murder, and secret emissaries ensue. Bergman never liked the project, and did not want it shown. "My very soul resisted this film, hiding in the deepest darkness of my sinus and nasal passages." The screening is introduced by Jan Holmberg, curator and CEO of the Ingmar Bergman Foundation and Bergman Archives. (1950, subtitles, 84 minutes)

Brink of Life

Mon Sep 3 (1:00)

Three powerful performances occasioned a three-way best-actress award at the 1958 Cannes Film Festival for Eva Dahlbeck, Ingrid Thulin, and Bibi Andersson in *Brink of Life*, a chamber play set in a hospital maternity ward. Representing different backgrounds, the three women reveal a range of emotional and mental processes experienced during their pregnancies (and, in one case, a live birth) and the effect

of sharing these experiences. As in Bergman's 1966 film *Persona*, "there is something archaic or primal at work in the women's confrontation"—Thomas Elsaesser. (1957, subtitles, 85 minutes)

Black Maria: Selections from the Festival

Jul 21

For thirty-seven years the Black Maria Film Festival has been advancing inventiveness and vitality in the short form. Named for Thomas Edison's original West Orange, New Jersey, movie studio (its resemblance to black-box police paddy wagons sparked the nickname "Black Maria"), the Black Maria Festival is an annual juried competition centered at New Jersey City University and open to all genres and all makers. The films in these two programs at the Gallery were chosen from among the award winners at the most recent competition. With special thanks to Black Maria executive director Jane Steuerwald, who introduces both events.

Black Maria I

Sat Jul 21 (1:00)

The Washing Society (Lynne Sachs and Lizzie Olesker, 2018, 44 minutes); *Dandelion* (Lisa Talentino, 2017, 3 minutes); *The Paintings Paint Themselves* (James Hollenbaugh, 2017, 6 minutes); *Theatrum Magicum* (Marcin Gizycki, 2017, 23 minutes); *The Driver is Red* (Randall Christopher, 2017, 15 minutes); *Analog Orange* (John Hawk, 2017, 3 minutes); *Mama* (Mert Canatan, 2017, 10 minutes). (Total running time 104 minutes)

Black Maria II

Sat Jul 21 (3:30)

New York City Sketchbook (Willy Hartland, 2017, 13 minutes); *Atlantic City Character Study* (Billy Linker and Ben Carey, 2017, 29 minutes); *Insecta* (Ramey Newell, 2017, 5 minutes); *On the Cusp* (Yuri Alves, 2017, 10 minutes); *I Saw You Yesterday* (John Valeriani, 2017, 3 minutes); *Little Potato* (Wes Hurley and Nathan Miller, 2017, 14 minutes); *Game* (Jeannie Donohoe, 2017, 15 minutes); *Sans Chlorophyll* (Phil Davis, 2017, 3 minutes). (Total running time 91 minutes)

From Vault to Screen: UCLA Festival of Preservation

Aug 11 – Sep 3

The UCLA Film & Television Archive's biennial preservation festival is renowned for bringing back rare relics of Hollywood history, affording instructive views into a neglected past. This year's varied showcase includes a beloved Ernst Lubitsch classic, two works by a pioneering American woman director, a silent starring comedienne Constance Talmadge, a Laurel and Hardy early sound feature, and a 1970s documentary on African American activist Fred Hampton. Additional titles screen at the AFI Silver Theater.

Trouble in Paradise

Sat Aug 11 (4:00)

Master crooks and con artists Gaston Monescu (Herbert Marshall) and Lily Vautier (Miriam Hopkins) fall in love and then decide to cozy up to wealthy entrepreneur heiress Madame Colet (Kay Francis)—but life gets complicated. *Trouble in Paradise's* witty repartee is surpassed only by its elegant visuals. "Lubitsch is a director of surfaces that

Ernst Lubitsch

Trouble in Paradise, 1932

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Juleen Compton

The Plastic Dome of Norma Jean, 1966

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continually reveal themselves to be illusions” — Jan-Christopher Horak. (Ernst Lubitsch, 1932, 35mm, 82 minutes) *Restored from 35mm nitrate studio print and 35mm acetate duplicate negative by UCLA Film & Television Archive with funding provided by The Packard Humanities Institute and David Stenn.*

Stranded

Sat Aug 25 (2:00)

The first of two films by the unjustly forgotten, pioneering, American independent Juleen Compton, *Stranded* follows a young woman called Raina (Compton herself) traveling in Greece with her American lover (Gary Collins) and her French, gay best friend (Gian Pietro Calasso). “The autobiographical film shares the cinematic experimentation and stylish, youth-centric rebellion of the French New Wave made even more radical by its progressive portrayals of female independence and sexuality” — Maya Montañez Smukler. (Juleen Compton, 1965, 35mm, 90 minutes) *Restored by UCLA Film & Television Archive with funding provided by Century Arts Foundation.*

The Plastic Dome of Norma Jean

Sat Aug 25 (4:00)

“Filmed in the Ozarks with a cast of unknowns (a twenty-five-year-old Sam Waterston costars in his first film), the opening title sequence — the two young leads walking through a bucolic setting with Michel Legrand’s sentimental score — suggests a tender tale about a pair of young companions. However, the movie quickly takes an unusual turn when Norma Jean and her friend Vance pick up an enormous plastic dome. The narrative never reveals the structure’s origins, but the image of the looming yet magical two-story-high edifice provides an engaging and enigmatic set piece for the rest of the movie. An impressive example of American independent feature filmmaking during the mid-1960s” — UCLA. (Juleen Compton, 1966, 35mm, 82 minutes) *Restored by UCLA Film & Television Archive with funding provided by Century Arts Foundation.*

Ciné-concert: Good References

Andrew Simpson, pianist

Sun Aug 26 (4:00)

Unable to find a decent job, comedienne Constance Talmadge (with no good references to rely on) decides to masquerade as a sick friend and assume her role as secretary to a socialite. Constance was the younger sister of actress Norma Talmadge and very few of her silent films survive.

“Long considered lost, an original nitrate print of *Good References* surfaced at the Národní filmový archiv in Prague, and was provided to UCLA for this restoration” — Steven K. Hill. (R. William Neill, 1920, 35mm, 60 minutes) *Preservation funded by The Packard Humanities Institute, Barbara Roisman Cooper and Martin M. Cooper.*

The Murder of Fred Hampton

Sun Aug 26 (5:30)

“A group of independent filmmakers in Chicago set out to profile Chairman Fred Hampton, the charismatic, twenty-one-year-old leader of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party, and ended up documenting the last nine months of his life.... *The Murder of Fred Hampton* is not just exceptional for the investigation it presents. It shows a fuller portrait of a misunderstood political movement that was simplistically reduced, by its critics and the media, as one solely devoted to violent militancy” — Jillian Borders. (Howard Alk, 1971, 35mm, 88 minutes) *Restored by UCLA Film & Television Archive with funding by the National Film Preservation Foundation and The Packard Humanities Institute.*

Sons of the Desert

Preceded by Berth Marks

Mon Sep 3 (3:30)

After a string of successful silent shorts for Hal Roach Studios, Laurel and Hardy made a seamless transition to sound with their unique comic timing intact — plus a nifty new array of off-screen noises. *Sons of the Desert* was their fourth sound feature and one of the top ten films of 1934, spoofing everything from fraternal lodges to marriage banalities. (William A. Seiter, 1934, 35mm, 65 minutes) *Restored by*

UCLA Film & Television Archive with funding provided by the George Lucas Family Foundation and The Film Foundation.

Sons of the Desert is preceded by *Berth Marks*, with the boys sharing an upper berth in a Pullman sleeping car. (Lewis R. Foster, 1929, 35mm, 19 minutes) *Restored by UCLA Film & Television Archive with funding provided by The Packard Humanities Institute.*

Jacques Becker:

Poet of the Commonplace

Sep 8–23

Championed by the younger filmmakers of the French New Wave of the 1960s, the films of Jacques Becker (1906–1960) have been largely disregarded in more recent times. Yet Becker's relatively small body of work constitutes some of the most engaging cinema of postwar Europe. His family knew Paul Cézanne's family, and through that connection the young Becker met Jean Renoir. Although the two filmmakers worked together on many of Renoir's films, Becker launched his own career after returning from a stint as a German prisoner-of-war. With compassion, wit, and a gift for working with actors, he became a perceptive chronicler of life in Paris during the 1940s and 1950s. In films such as *Rendez-vous de juillet* he also demonstrated a fondness for Hollywood cinema and American jazz. This series screens eight of Becker's films, several of which have recently been restored and theatrically re-released.

Falbalas (Paris Frills)

Sat Sep 8 (2:30)

Shot near the end of the German occupation, *Falbalas* marks the start of Becker's foray into the 1940s Paris milieu that



was to become his métier—a visual theme he continued to advance in subsequent films. Set in the world of Parisian haute couture, *Falbalas*'s tragicomedy revolves around the romantic maneuverings within one of the city's flourishing fashion houses. (1945, subtitles, 111 minutes)

Antoine et Antoinette

Sun Sep 9 (4:00)

Antoine et Antoinette is a delicate tale of a young Parisian couple who, not long after the liberation, find themselves with a winning lottery ticket that somehow gets misplaced. Though the plot is modest—ordinary people striving to make ends meet—it vibrantly portrays working-class life through colorful characters who embody facets of everyday Paris. (1947, subtitles, 78 minutes)

Édouard et Caroline

Sat Sep 15 (2:00)

The last in a trio of sympathetic urban comedies, *Édouard et Caroline*'s gently farcical plot centers on a young couple who nearly ruin their marriage when he—an aspiring concert pianist—quarrels with his wife over her outfit as they dress for a pompous cocktail party. “The slightness of the plot was later to inspire the Young Turks of the Nouvelle Vague”—Charlotte Garson. (1951, subtitles, 88 minutes)

Ali Baba

Sat Sep 15 (4:00)

An unusual departure from his lyrical black-and-white productions, *Ali Baba* was a full-blown commercial blockbuster in color, complete with belly dancers, magnificent Moroccan architecture, and famous comedian Fernandel as the *Arabian Nights* hero who outwits the forty thieves. In his assessment of Becker's oeuvre, François Truffaut evoked writer Jean Giraudoux to say that “‘there are no works, there are only authors,’ praising Becker's technical competence”—Cecilia Sayad. (1954, subtitles, 93 minutes)



Rendez-vous de juillet

Sun Sep 16 (4:00)

Saint-Germain-des-Prés was the bohemian center of postwar Paris, a place where actors, artists, musicians, and philosophers mingled, jived, and jammed. *Rendez-vous de juillet* catches the spirit of young friends who come together in the heady atmosphere of the *quartier*, then drift apart when the romantic idealist in their group resolves to leave for Africa to work on an ethnographic film. (1949, subtitles, 112 minutes)

Casque d'or

Sat Sep 22 (2:00)

Becker evokes turn-of-the-century Paris in *Casque d'or*—but it's a world of petty thieves, pimps, and prostitutes and a tale of gangland passions and treachery. “A film of great plastic beauty, a moving portrait of life in Belleville in a style that recalls old engravings and the films of Feuillade. Becker makes his characters come to life [and] Simone Signoret, in the full bloom of her beauty, gives the performance of her career” —Georges Sadoul. (1952, subtitles, 94 minutes)

Touchez pas au grisbi

Sat Sep 22 (4:00)

Based on a *série noire* novel by Albert Simonin (who coauthored the screenplay), *Touchez pas au grisbi* helped to launch a fad for film noir in French cinema of the 1950s. Max le Menteur (Jean Gabin) is a wealthy and well-mannered gangster—but also aging, world-weary, and ready to retire, except, he hopes, for one more heist. “The beauty of the characters comes from the economy of their gestures. They only do the essential... a kind of settling of scores between high-class cats” —François Truffaut. (1954, subtitles, 96 minutes)

Le Trou

Sun Sep 23 (4:00)

In Becker's final film—with amateur actors and a documentary-like realism—four jaded convicts prepare for a breakout. When a fifth inmate arrives to share the cell, the coconspirators bring the newcomer into their plot. Based on an autobiographical novel by ex-Nazi collaborator José

Giovanni, *Le Trou*'s focused austerity is reminiscent of Robert Bresson's *Un condamné à mort s'est échappé*. "How many pages would be necessary to catalogue all the marvels of this masterpiece, of this film which I consider... the greatest French film ever made" — Jean-Pierre Melville. (1960, subtitles, 132 minutes)

Image credits

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Cover: Ingmar Bergman, *Summer Interlude*, 1951

Inside front cover: Billy Linker and Ben Carey, *Atlantic City Character Study*, 2017

Inside back cover: Peter Hutton, *Łódź Symphony*, 1993





Film

Summer 2018
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