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National Gallery of Art 2020 Winter Film Program Features Documentaries on American Artists, African and Armenian Films, Kiarostami Retrospective, Films by William Noland, Ciné-Essays, and Discussions with Filmmakers

—Screenings in New Locations for Early 2020 Season—



Still image from *Hyenas*, by Djibril Diop Mambéty (1992, subtitles, 110 minutes), screening at the Embassy of France, as part of the film series African Legacy: Francophone Films 1955 to 2019, on March 19, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. Image courtesy Metrograph Pictures.

Washington, DC—The 2020 winter film season (January–March) at the National Gallery of Art offers a selection of new restorations, ciné-essays, special events with filmmakers, and several series of archival and contemporary films from around the world.

The season opens with the rarely seen early work of Abbas Kiarostami, shown as part of a complete retrospective of the Iranian master's legacy screening in three locations in the Washington, DC, area—the AFI Silver Theatre, the Freer Gallery of Art, and the National Gallery of Art. A tribute to Checkerboard Film Foundation's ongoing documentation of American artists features ten of the foundation's most recent films. *Displaced: Immigration Stories*, organized in association with Richard

Mosse: Incoming, allows audiences to view the migrant crisis in Europe and the United States through artists' eyes. *African Legacy: Francophone Films 1955 to 2019* celebrates the rich tradition of filmmaking in Cameroon, Mauritania, Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Niger, including filmmakers such as Med Hondo, Timité Bassori, Paulin Soumanou Vieyra, Ousmane Sembène, Djibril Diop Mambéty, and Moustapha Alassane as well as new work by contemporary Cameroonian artist Rosine Mbakam. *An Armenian Odyssey*, organized jointly with PostClassical Ensemble, the Embassy of Armenia, the National Cinema Center of Armenia, and the Freer Gallery, combines new films and recent restorations, including works by Sergei Parajanov, Kevork Mourad, Hamo Bek-Nazaryan, and Rouben Mamoulian, as well as musical events at Washington National Cathedral.

Film screenings include several special events and lectures; filmmaker presentations with Rima Yamazaki and William Noland; and recent documentaries such as *Cunningham*; *Leaving Home*, *Coming Home: A Portrait of Robert Frank*; *Museum Town*; *The Hottest August*; *Architecture of Infinity*; and *It Will Be Chaos*.

The winter films are screened in the East Building Auditorium and West Building Lecture Hall at the National Gallery of Art as well as at the Embassy of France and Freer Gallery of Art due to ongoing Master Facilities Plan renovations in the East Building. All events are free of charge. Online reservations are required for screenings at the Embassy of France; information is available at www.frenchculture.org.

Films are screened in original formats whenever possible. Seating for all events at the Gallery is on a first-come, first-seated basis. Doors open approximately 30 minutes before each show. Programs are subject to change. For more information, visit nga.gov/film.

Special Events

Lines of Transmission: Cinema and Art History

Richard I. Suchenski, associate professor of film and electronic arts, Bard College, speaker

January 12, 2:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

In an illustrated talk, Richard I. Suchenski discusses the cinematic reworking of aesthetic currents, narrative structures, and iconographic patterns that have persisted throughout the history of art. *Lines of Transmission: Cinema and Art History* uses examples from films by Sergei Eisenstein, Andrei Tarkovsky, Michelangelo Antonioni, and other notable filmmakers together with paintings, sculpture, and graphic works from the Gallery's collection. It highlights cinema's capacity to transform the energies of other art forms into an integrated audiovisual experience and the ways in which ambitious films have sustained and reinvigorated aesthetic traditions—even while disrupting more established forms of viewing. (Approximately 60 minutes)

William Noland in person

January 18, 2:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

This program of short works by William Noland (son of American color field painter Kenneth Noland) sits at the intersection of art, science, and experimental documentary. Six short films are screened: *Bicycle Day*, exploring the clinical use of LSD in dreamlike fashion using images drawn from news reports and controlled experimental studies (2016); *Apparatus Synapse*, conveying through neuroscience experiments the rhythms and patterns of thought and reaction (2016); *Oneiric*, observing individuals in coffee shops in thrall to their devices and asking the viewer to consider the nature of contemporary social interaction (2014); *Instruction Book on Self*, showing solitary characters delivering divergent narratives about the self (2019); *nix*, examining our dystopian present and uncertain future through the prism of big data, psychometrics, microtargeted surveillance, and techniques of persuasion (2018); and *Toxic Detroit*, in which the city's surreal industrial wasteland belies the optimism of Detroiters themselves (2012). (Total running time 100 minutes)

Leaving Home, Coming Home: A Portrait of Robert Frank preceded by *Fire in the East: A Portrait of Robert Frank*

January 25, 2:30 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

An intimate view of his life and work at the time, *Fire in the East: A Portrait of Robert Frank* was the first documentary depiction of Robert Frank and includes many friends and colleagues such as Allen Ginsberg, Jonas Mekas, Rudy Wurlitzer, and others. (Philip Brookman and Amy Brookman, 1986, 28 minutes)

A cinema verité sketch moving between New York and Nova Scotia, *Leaving Home, Coming Home* captures Robert Frank (who died in 2019) reflecting on a life of image-making as he revisits places where he lived and worked. Though completed 15 years ago, this first feature-length film about the Swiss-American photographer was only recently released in the United States. (Gerald Fox, 2005, 85 minutes)

Renzo Piano—The Architect of Light

February 1, noon

West Building Lecture Hall

Celebrated Spanish director Carlos Saura captures the genius of one of the most famous Italian architects, Renzo Piano, during the design and construction of the Botín Center in Santander, Spain. The story becomes a reflection on Piano's creative process and on the synergetic relationship between architecture and cinema. (Carlos Saura, 2018, subtitles, 80 minutes)

Screening Race in American Nontheatrical Film

Allyson Nadia Field and Marsha Gordon, coeditors of *Screening Race in American Nontheatrical Film* (Duke University Press, 2019), speakers

February 15, 2:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

This program showcases a selection of 16 mm shorts produced between the 1940s and 1970s that engage with ideas about race, identity, and community outside mainstream theatrical cinema. Selections include educational films, home movies, industry and government films, student films, and anthropological films. From one of the earliest known film representations of a Japanese American cultural movement in the post–World War II era, to a Charles and Ray Eames film about the Day of the Dead, to a portrait of a young African American high schooler living in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles on the cusp of the 1965 rebellion, these films portray the lives of those who were mostly excluded from the commercial Hollywood movies of the same period. (Approximately 130 minutes)

Learning from Buffalo

Rima Yamazaki in person

February 22, 2:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

Buffalo, New York, is home to several architectural masterpieces, including Louis Sullivan's Guaranty Building and Frank Lloyd Wright's Darwin D. Martin House. Architecture is embraced as a treasure, but it can also be a burden to a city. Like many other American cities, Buffalo has suffered from economic downturn during recent decades. Moving back and forth between architectural documentation, historical testimony, and interviews with Buffalo residents, filmmaker Rima Yamazaki depicts many dimensions in her observational survey of architecture and cityscape in this prominent postindustrial American town. (Rima Yamazaki, 2018, 100 minutes)

The World Must Be Measured by Eye

Rima Yamazaki in person

February 22, 4:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

Artist Ellen Altfest is known for methodically layered still-life paintings in which she renders every detail of her subjects on a one-to-one scale. Through studying Altfest's meticulous, repetitive, and painstaking creative process, *The World Must Be Measured by Eye* examines the acts of creation and of seeing. The film also explores the border between representation and abstraction as the painter's extreme realism and careful composition push her paintings to that boundary. (Rima Yamazaki, 2019, 65 minutes)

The Hottest August

March 15, 4:00 p.m.

East Building Auditorium

A ciné-essay with unique depictions of New York's outer-borough neighborhoods, *The Hottest August* was filmed during repeat visits to numerous denizens and their families over the course of one month, August 2017. There were rising anxieties over everything from escalating rents to marching white nationalists to incessant news stories about wildfires and hurricanes on America's coasts. The film's focus pivots on the question of Earth's future: namely, where do we go from here? (Brett Story, 2019, 94 minutes)

Museum Town

March 21, 2:00 p.m.

East Building Auditorium

The Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA)—housed in a huge converted 19th-century factory complex in North Adams—is one of the principal centers for contemporary visual and performing art in the United States. *Museum Town* tells a story of North Adams and MASS MoCA: the spirit, risks, and expectations that went into making it work and the capacity for art to generate cultural and economic rebirth. The film features original music by John Stirratt and Wilco and appearances by artists ranging from James Turrell to Bill T. Jones. (Jennifer Trainer, 2019, 76 minutes)

Cunningham

March 28, 2:30 p.m.

East Building Auditorium

A new documentary about the groundbreaking choreographer Merce Cunningham focuses on his creative progression during the critical decades of the 1940s through the 1970s. The film depicts his early years as a striving artist in postwar New York and his rise as one of the world's most visionary interpreters of dance. Cunningham, who was intrigued by the capacity of random phenomena to express movement, has also been associated with major 20th-century artistic trends. The film includes some never-before-seen material and rediscovered footage. (Alla Kovgan, 2019, 93 minutes)

Architecture of Infinity

March 29, 4:00 p.m.

East Building Auditorium

Swiss filmmaker Christoph Schaub's unusual, poetic, and visually stunning survey of contemporary sacred spaces and church buildings considers the work of architects Peter Zumthor, Peter Märkli, and Álvaro Siza Vieira; artists James Turrell and Cristina Iglesias; and percussion virtuoso Jojo Mayer. Making a case for a spiritual life in architecture (and other arts), the film also relates the spaces on view to the natural world. The faintly floating cinematography suggests an otherworldliness, and Schaub turns his film into a personal journey through his earlier life, when his fascination with sacred architecture began. (Christoph Schaub, 2018, 86 minutes)

Film Series

Abbas Kiarostami—Early Films

January 4–18

Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami is celebrated as one of the greatest moving-image artists of the last century. His early films—frequently overshadowed by his later work and rarely exhibited—are wise, restrained, often playful, and display a singular humanistic perspective. As a skilled young graphic designer and photographer, Kiarostami joined the nascent film unit of the cultural nonprofit agency known as Kanoon (Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults), where he learned the craft of documentary storytelling and developed the remarkable techniques and themes that would characterize his later career. Despite the strict censorship of this period, Kiarostami, who worked independently, managed to reveal a highly diversified and multifaceted Iranian society in his films. The Gallery is pleased to join the Freer Gallery of Art and the American Film Institute in presenting a complete retrospective of Kiarostami's films. Most of the films in the Gallery's program, largely produced before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, have now been restored. With special thanks to Janus Films and to L'Immagine Ritrovata Film Restoration and Conservation Laboratory, Bologna.

Kiarostami Shorts Program I

January 4, 2:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

The opening program consists of six early shorts: *The Bread and Alley*, a tale of a boy's distressing encounter with a dog choreographed to a version of The Beatles' *Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da* (1970, 12 minutes); *Breaktime*, exploring the aftermath of shattering a window during school recess (1972, 15 minutes); *So Can I*, an experiment in combining live action and animation (1975, 4 minutes); *Two Solutions for One Problem*, presenting two schoolboys' differing views of a dilemma involving a borrowed book with a torn cover (1975, 5 minutes); *The Colors*, a whimsical tutorial for children discovering the colors of the spectrum (1976, 16 minutes); and *How to Make Use of Leisure Time*, a witty instructional guide on repainting and restoring old doors (1977, 18 minutes). (Total running time 70 minutes)

A Wedding Suit

January 4, 4:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

This caper tale featuring three adolescents who "borrow" a bespoke suit for a special occasion from a tailor's shop (where one of them is apprenticing) is not only a charming comedy but also a shrewd social critique. Though a minor work in Kiarostami's oeuvre, *A Wedding Suit* anticipates several of his later motifs—social mobility, moral ambiguity, and a natural empathy for struggling children. (1976, subtitles, 59 minutes)

The Traveler

January 5, 4:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

The Traveler's young hero sets up an impromptu portrait studio to finance his bus ticket to a soccer game, duping his unsuspecting clients by neglecting to load film into the camera. (1974, subtitles, 74 minutes)

The Report

January 11, 2:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

Kiarostami's overlooked first feature, *The Report*, tracks a week in the life of a young government worker—a tax collector named Mohammad Firouzkuhi. During this short time span, he faces eviction, is accused of asking for bribes, and has a life-altering quarrel with his wife. Ever disciplined, Kiarostami allows these events to play out with a clarity that probes the human condition. The film's location shooting paints a subdued portrait of prerevolutionary Tehran. (1977, subtitles, 109 minutes)

Kiarostami Shorts Program II

January 11, 4:30 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

The second program of shorts consists of *Orderly or Disorderly*, presenting behavior on a playground, in a bus, and finally in the chaotic traffic of Tehran filmed twice—once orderly and then disorderly—though with a distinctive fateful twist (1981, 17 minutes); *The Chorus*, a reflection on the contrasts of silence and sound, youth and age, solitude and camaraderie (1982, 17 minutes); *Solution*, Kiarostami's witty variation on a road movie, shot in a mountainous setting and accompanied by a stirring score (1978, 11 minutes); and *Toothache*, a dentist's discussion of oral hygiene conflicting with young Mohammad's life at home and school (1980, 26 minutes). (Total running time 71 minutes)

Case #1, Case #2 preceded by *Tribute to Teachers*

January 18, 12:30 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

Tribute to Teachers, a sequence of interviews with Iranian schoolteachers is in effect Kiarostami's homage to the teaching profession. (1977, 17 minutes)

Completed during the period of the Iranian Revolution, *Case #1, Case #2* reflects on the consequences of compliance and resistance. Set in a boys' school, the film depicts two dramatized versions of a class disciplinary problem. In one, a student reports a troublemaker; in the other, several different students refuse to rat on the wrongdoer. Kiarostami then shows his footage to a group of adult authority figures consisting of educators, politicians, and a few others and records their commentary. (1979, 47 minutes) (Total running time 64 minutes)

Checkerboard Films on the American Arts: Recent Releases

January 7–February 25

Checkerboard Film Foundation is a nonprofit institution established in 1979 to document, through film and video, artists who have made unique and important contributions to American art, architecture, and design. Checkerboard's surveys examine such diverse subjects as contemporary artists like Kiki Smith, art historians like Vincent Scully, and individual structures including Jean Nouvel's Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis and the KieranTimberlake firm's Loblolly House on the Chesapeake Bay. This five-part series presents a few recent projects from Checkerboard, including new portraits of James Rosenquist and Frank Stella and a look at Cornell Tech, the graduate school for technology, engineering, and applied science on Roosevelt Island in New York City. With special thanks to Edgar Howard, president of Checkerboard Film Foundation.

James Rosenquist Up Close

January 7, 12:30 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

This film captures James Rosenquist, a leading figure in the pop art movement, sharing tales from his life in the art world in one of the final interviews before his death in 2017. The film follows the trajectory of his career from the early 1960s paintings depicting America's consumer culture, to his interests in politics and the environment, to his late kaleidoscopic depictions of the universe and space. (Edgard Howard and Susan Wald, 2019, 48 minutes)

Frank Stella Black Aluminum Copper followed by Cornell Tech: Architecture and Art

January 14, 12:30 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

Frank Stella, one of the enduring figures in mid-20th-century American painting, revisits the seminal paintings that were on display in an L&M Arts gallery retrospective. As Stella looks back on his practice and approaches to his art, several curators and historians—including Adam Weinberg, Alice Pratt Brown, and Ann Temkin—also reflect on his place in the history of American art. (Edgar Howard and Susan Wald, 2019, 24 minutes)

Cornell Tech, a new graduate school for technology, engineering, and applied science, opened its Roosevelt Island campus in New York City in 2017. Architects discuss their innovative spaces, connected by an open and public campus design. (Edgar Howard and Susan Wald, 2018, 31 minutes)

On the Wings of Brancusi

January 21, 1:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi had a lasting influence on a generation of American artists including Carl Andre, Lynda Benglis, Ellsworth Kelly, Richard Serra, Donald Judd, Martin Puryear, and others. *On the Wings of Brancusi* visits sites such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Brancusi gallery and his recreated studio at the Centre Pompidou in Paris and offers commentary from a range of curators and critics. (Edgar Howard and Susan Wald, 2018, 52 minutes)

Eric Fischl: The Process of Painting followed by *Carrie Mae Weems: Speaking of Art Lecture*

February 4, 12:30 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

Eric Fischl works in various media—paint, photography, and watercolor—while revealing his influences, including Auguste Rodin and Thomas Eakins. This film is coproduced with the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. (Edgar Howard, 2012, 38 minutes)

Based on a discussion by the noted American photographer and artist, *Carrie Mae Weems: Speaking of Art* reviews Weems's entire body of work, including the *Family Pictures and Stories* series, *The Kitchen Table Series*, *The Louisiana Project*, and more. (Edgar Howard and Muffie Dunn, 2012, 29 minutes)

Jeff Koons: The Whitney Retrospective

February 25, 12:30 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

As sculptor Jeff Koons and curator Scott Rothkopf walk through a Whitney Museum of American Art exhibition, comments from Adam Weinberg, Robert Storr, Michelle Kuo, and others form a dynamic exploration of Koons's practice. (Edgar Howard and Susan Wald, 2016, 54 minutes)

Displaced: Immigration Stories

January 19–March 22

Displacement due to war, persecution, natural disasters, or political folly has been a reality for millions of the world's citizens for centuries. However, the current migrant crisis in Europe and the United States seems borne very directly of national policy decisions that have catalyzed a mass forced migration of people searching for very basic human requirements: clean water and air, a living wage, and freedom from tyranny. Programmed in conjunction with *Richard Mosse: Incoming*, this series highlights a selection of films by and about immigrants and asylum seekers, with unique voices from Bosnia, Eritrea, France, the Philippines, Syria, and the United States.

The Foreigner's Home preceded by *Over*

January 19, 4:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

In the short *Over*, a quiet London neighborhood is the site of what is presumably a crime scene. As events unfold in reverse order through a sequence of nine wide shots, tension suffuses the film—and an unforeseen reality becomes clear. (Jörn Threlfall, 2015, 14 minutes)

When writer Toni Morrison was invited to curate an exhibition at the Louvre in Paris in 2006, she created *The Foreigner's Home*—a reflective and interpretive exhibition and set of conversations with international artists about objects in the museum's renowned collections. The film combines exclusive and unreleased footage of the Nobel Laureate in dialogue with artists—including filmmaker Charles

Burnett and musician Kendrick Lamar among many others—with extensive archival footage, music, and still images to present a series of candid and incisive exchanges about race, identity, "foreignness," and the power of art. (Rian Brown and Geoff Pingree, 2018, 57 minutes)

No Data Plan preceded by *Disintegration 93-96*

Discussion with Miko Revereza

January 26, 4:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

The highly personal work of award-winning filmmaker Miko Revereza questions what it means to belong. His *Disintegration 93-96* is a frenetic collage of home movies that highlight his father's increasingly strained relationship to his immediate family, all living in the United States undocumented. (Miko Revereza, 2017, 6 minutes)

No Data Plan, Revereza's first feature, is a diaristic road movie captured in passenger-train interiors as the filmmaker travels from Los Angeles to New York City. (Miko Revereza, 2019, 70 minutes) The screening at the Gallery is followed by a Skyped conversation with the artist, who recently chose to return to the Philippines.

The Wild Frontier

February 1, 2:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

Now demolished, the jungle in Calais, France—a temporary complex of tents and abodes that housed upward of 12,000 displaced persons—is the setting for this sensitive and absorbing portrait of a place and its inhabitants. The film features testimonials and reflections from migrants forced into the camp on the border of Europe, one of the physical locations in Richard Mosse's *Incoming*. (Nicolas Klotz and Élisabeth Perceval, 2017, subtitles, 225 minutes)

LOGBOOK SERBISTAN preceded by *Inventory*

February 9, 4:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

Known for his development of the docudrama—a mode of documentary filmmaking that actively eschews objectivity—Bosnian filmmaker Želimir Žilnik has trained his lens on the everyday plight of ordinary people since the 1960s. Žilnik's 1970s short film *Inventory (Inventur - Metzstrasse 11)*, a portrait of several tenants "from elsewhere" living in a housing complex in Munich, precedes the feature. (Želimir Žilnik, 1975, subtitles, 9 minutes)

LOGBOOK SERBISTAN relates stories of several young migrants and asylum seekers housed in refugee centers in Serbia. Following dramatic flights from the war and destitution gripping their homelands in North Africa and the Middle East, they are each forced to negotiate complex new ways of living. (Želimir Žilnik, 2015, subtitles, 94 minutes)

It Will Be Chaos

Lorena Luciano and Filippo Piscopo in person

March 22, 4:00 p.m.

East Building Auditorium

It Will Be Chaos unfurls between Italy and the Balkan corridor against a background of the darkest European migrant crisis since World War II. Five years in the making, the cinema verité documentary tracks two refugee stories—that of Aregai, an Eritrean shipwreck survivor fleeing his country's dictatorship, and that of Wael, who is about to embark on a life-threatening expedition to bring his Syrian wife and four children to safety in Germany. The film captures the mounting tensions between the newcomers and locals. *It Will Be Chaos* received a 2019 Emmy Award for best current affairs documentary. (Lorena Luciano and Filippo Piscopo, 93 minutes) Special thanks to HBO Documentary Films.

African Legacy: Francophone Films 1955 to 2019

February 8–March 21

The first installment in an annual program focusing on African cinema through historical and contemporary lenses, this series brings together 14 films—several of which have recently been preserved or restored—offering a range of interpretations of the culture of French-speaking Africa and the African diaspora. The films tell the stories of artisans, musicians, storytellers, and more, all of which confront the colonial accounts of African legacy and invention. Three events take place at the Embassy of France in Washington, DC. Special thanks to the embassy, La Cinémathèque Afrique de l'Institut Français, and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy. Registration is required for events at the Embassy of France: www.frenchculture.org.

Muna Moto

February 8, 2:30 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

An early fiction feature from Cameroon, Jean-Pierre Dikongué-Pipa's *Muna Moto* is a stunning Romeo-and-Juliet saga. N'gando wishes to marry N'domé, but her family expects the traditional wedding offering. N'gando, who is poor, is unable to realize this customary duty. N'domé is bearing his child and, according to village tradition, she must take a husband who can afford to support her. When the villagers decide on N'gando's uncle, the story takes a downward turn. (Jean-Pierre Dikongué-Pipa, 1975, subtitles, 89 minutes) Restored in 2019 by The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project at L'Immagine Ritrovata with funding from the George Lucas Family Foundation.

La Femme au couteau

Introduced by Aboubakar Sanogo

February 16, 4:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

In Timité Bassori's Ivorian film from the 1960s, Freudian psychology is introduced into an African tale.

A young bourgeois man from the Ivory Coast returns home after a long time in Europe. Traumatized, he must readjust to his own society and to his own sexual inhibitions, made manifest by a recurring dream about a woman brandishing a knife. This alienating nightmare prevents him from having normal relations. As he turns to provincial healers, he discovers he's wedged between traditional values and modernity. (Timité Bassori, 1969, subtitles, 77 minutes) Restored in 2019 by The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project at L'Imagine Ritrovata with funding from the George Lucas Family Foundation.

The Return of an Adventurer preceded by *Afrique sur Seine* and *Samba le grand*

Introduced by Aboubakar Sanogo

February 18, 7:00 p.m.

Embassy of France

Registration required: www.frenchculture.org

The pre-independence *Afrique sur Seine* explores the lives of Africans living in Paris, its poetic voiceover evoking the many uncertainties about identity that plagued students in a colonialist era. (Paulin Soumanou Vieyra and Mamadou Sarr, 1955, subtitles, 21 minutes)

Samba le grand's colorful stop-motion puppets relate an African folktale about a would-be conqueror who meets his match in a female potentate. (Moustapha Alassane, 1977, subtitles, 14 minutes)

A pioneer of the cinema of Niger, Alassane was known for playful satire and piercing observations on contemporary African life. In *The Return of an Adventurer*, a man coming back to his home village from America bears gifts of cowboy outfits for his friends. A mock-ruthless Western movie ensues, scorning contemporary values and consumerism and poking fun at the filmmaker's own postcolonial peers. (Moustapha Alassane, 1966, subtitles, 34 minutes)

La Noire de . . . preceded by *Borom Sarret*

February 23, 4:00 p.m.

West Building Lecture Hall

Borom Sarret, made on a shoestring budget using a secondhand 16 mm camera and donated stock, is a beautiful short story about a horse-drawn cart driver who refuses to charge his passengers for rides and, on the surface, seems to lack the skill necessary to run a business. (Ousmane Sembène, 1963, subtitles, 18 minutes)

Ousmane Sembène's debut feature *La Noire de . . .*, the first work by an African filmmaker to be seen widely in the West, adapts Sembène's own short story, a contemporary tale of a naïve young woman lured to France by a white couple who enslave her as their domestic. (Ousmane Sembène, 1966, subtitles, 80 minutes) Restored by Cineteca di Bologna, L'Imagine Ritrovata in association with the Sembène Estate, Institut national de l'audiovisuel, Éclair Laboratories, and the Centre National de la Cinématographie.

Le Franc followed by *La petite vendeuse de soleil*

March 3, 7:00 p.m.

Embassy of France

Registration required: www.frenchculture.org

In *Le Franc*, down-on-his-luck musician Marigo buys a lottery ticket and glues it to his door, eager to show his annoying landlady that he might one day have some rent money. When he gets lucky and wins, Marigo must detach his door and carry it miles across Dakar to claim the prize. (Djibril Diop Mambéty, 1994, subtitles, 45 minutes)

Both *Le Franc* and *La petite vendeuse de soleil* are modest stories of present-day urban Africans, part of Djibril Diop Mambéty's series, *Histoires de petites gens*. In what would be his final unfinished work (completed after his death by a group of friends, relatives, and collaborators with no funding), *La petite vendeuse* portrays the only young girl who dares to sell newspapers on the street, struggling to overcome hurdles in pursuit of a better life. (Djibril Diop Mambéty, 1999, subtitles, 45 minutes)

Chez Jolie Coiffure followed by *Two Faces of a Bamiléké Woman*

March 8, 4:00 p.m.

East Building Auditorium

Cameroon-born Rosine Mbakam's feature documentary *Chez Jolie Coiffure* is a graceful chamber piece shot in a tiny hair salon in Brussels. Managed by the charismatic but undocumented Sabine, Jolie Coiffure is a hub for West African women—many, like Sabine, are from Cameroon. She recruits for a tontine (an investment scheme that pays members an annuity), organizes lodging for women lacking papers, and, in quieter moments, recounts her own harrowing journey to Belgium. Though she has created a home, Sabine remains an outsider and locals often stop to gape. (Rosine Mbakam, 2019, subtitles, 70 minutes)

In *Two Faces of a Bamiléké Woman*, Mbakam returns to her mother's village in Cameroon. She wants to introduce her young son to the family, but even more, she wants deeper knowledge of her past and speaks at length with her mother and the other village women. Mama Bamiléké talks about traditional life, her own arranged marriage, and the robust and bolstering alliance of local women. (Rosine Mbakam, 2017, subtitles, 76 minutes)

Hyenas

March 19, 7:00 p.m.

Embassy of France

Registration required: www.frenchculture.org

Senegalese master Djibril Diop Mambéty's *Hyenas* is a satirical adaptation of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's play *The Visit*. A newly wealthy woman returning to her desert village proposes a deal to the citizenry: she will give the village her fortune in exchange for the murder of the local man who, years earlier, seduced her and abandoned her with a child. (Djibril Diop Mambéty, 1992, subtitles, 110 minutes)

Wend Kuuni

March 21, 4:00 p.m.

East Building Auditorium

A parable of precolonial Africa, *Wend Kuuni* recounts the saga of a mute and famished youth who, abandoned in the bush, is discovered and raised with tender compassion by the Mossi tribe. (Gaston Kaboré, 1982, subtitles, 75 minutes)

An Armenian Odyssey

February 29–March 14

In collaboration with the Freer Gallery of Art, PostClassical Ensemble, the Embassy of Armenia, and the National Cinema Center of Armenia, this cycle of short and feature-length films is presented as part of a celebration of Armenian music, art, and history occurring simultaneously at several Washington institutions. Special thanks to the Embassy of Armenia and PostClassical Ensemble.

The Color of Pomegranates preceded by *Kiev Frescoes*

February 29, 1:00 p.m.

Freer Gallery of Art

Preceding the feature is the American premiere of a restored short film by Parajanov, *Kiev Frescoes*, composed of outtakes from an uncompleted film project. (Sergei Parajanov, 1966, 13 minutes)

The Color of Pomegranates is Sergei Parajanov's masterpiece, a dreamlike kinetic pictograph based on the life and writings of the 18th-century Armenian poet and troubadour Sayat Nova. Mingling tableaux, ritual, metaphor, music, and poetry, the film attempts to recount the poet's inner life while following his story from childhood through death, incorporating a tradition of Armenian miniature painting in the telling. The powerful imagery and expressive music aroused controversy when the film was first released in the USSR. (Sergei Parajanov, 1969, subtitles, 75 minutes) Commentary by Levon Abrahamyan, Joseph Horowitz, Peter Rollberg, and Daniel Bird.

Kevork Mourad's Four Acts for Syria followed by *Hakob Hovnatanyan* and *Arabesques on the Pirosmani Theme*

February 29, 3:30 p.m.

Freer Gallery of Art

Four Acts for Syria is "an animated film created with my film partner, Waref Abu Quba, who left Syria when the war started. Many of my ideas were inspired by my grandparents' and parents' stories, who told of living in a time in which Jews, Muslims and Christians lived together in Syria—in Qameshli, in Aleppo, and in Damascus. This film, created through the Robert Bosch Stiftung prize, is an homage to the country that was home to three generations of my family—refugees of the Armenian genocide—and to the culture that has most inspired my art and aesthetic. . . with a soundtrack by Kinan Azmeh and Zulal, the Armenian a cappella trio, and a poem written and recited by Raed Wahesh."—Kevork Mourad (Kevork Mourad, 2019, 14 minutes)

Following *Four Acts for Syria* is the American premiere of two restored shorts by Sergei Parajanov: *Hakob Hovnatanyan* about the 19th-century portrait painter Hovnatanyan, known as the "Raphael of Tiflis" (1967, 10 minutes) and *Arabesques on the Pirosmani Theme* about Georgian outsider artist Niko Pirosmani (1985, 21 minutes). (Total running time 45 minutes) Commentary by Kevork Mourad, Levon Abrahamyan, and Daniel Bird.

Zangezur

Introduced by Peter Rollberg

March 1, 1:00 p.m.

Freer Gallery of Art

Hamo Bek-Nazaryan is known as the father of Armenian cinema—he stands with Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, and Alexander Dovzhenko in the history of film. He was a popular actor in prerevolutionary Russian film as well as a founder of the Hayfilm (Armenfilm) studio in Yerevan. His vivid late 1930s sound film *Zangezur* is a chronicle of the 1920s civil war in Armenia, depicting efforts by the Bolsheviks in the mountainous Zangezur region to defeat the Dashnaks, the region's counterrevolutionary rulers. *Zangezur* was a trendsetter for the Armenian revolutionary drama, and the soundtrack by Aram Khachaturian features folkloric songs, a march, and two beautifully lyrical interludes. (Hamo Bek-Nazaryan, 1938, subtitles, 89 minutes)

Tribute to Rouben Mamoulian:

Love Me Tonight followed by excerpts from *Porgy and Bess*

March 14, 2:00 p.m.

East Building Auditorium

Armenian Rouben Mamoulian was born in the Georgian capital of Tiflis and trained at the Moscow Art Theater under Eugene Vakhtangov. Arriving in New York after stints in Paris and London, he fashioned a newly integrated musical theater, directing a dramatized version of Edwin DuBose Heyward's novel *Porgy* and George Gershwin's operatic *Porgy and Bess*, followed by *Oklahoma!* and *Carousel*. As a Hollywood film visionary, Mamoulian relentlessly experimented, and his *Love Me Tonight* is a singular "musical film," a send-up of the film musicals of Ernst Lubitsch. With its Rodgers and Hart score, the delightful fantasy (starring Maurice Chevalier, Jeanette MacDonald, and Myrna Loy) uses lyrics to advance the storytelling while camera shots and sounds together take on the beat. (Rouben Mamoulian, 1932, 104 minutes) Commentary by Joseph Horowitz, Milena Oganesyanyan, and Kurt Jensen.

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