

FRANCE

AROUND A SMALL MOUNTAIN

(36 VUES DU PIC SAINT LOUP)

2009, Jacques Rivette, France/Italy, 84 min.

With Jane Birkin, Sergio Castellitto

Sunday, March 28, 3:00 pm

Monday, March 29, 6:00 pm

"Effervescent...Wittily composed and edited, and shot through with genuine adoration for the landscape and culture of his homeland."--David Jenkins, *Time Out London*

An uncharacteristically brief work by 81-year-old master Rivette, *AROUND A SMALL MOUNTAIN* is a graceful reflection on his cherished themes of performance, spontaneity, and the creative process. While traveling through the mountainous Cévennes region, a peripatetic Italian businessman (Castellitto) becomes involved with a declining small-time circus and its mysterious, melancholy owner (Birkin). The story is based loosely on the life of author Raymond Roussel. In French with English subtitles. Special advance screening courtesy of The Cinema Guild. 35mm. (MR)

BLUEBEARD

(BARBE BLEUE)

2009, Catherine Breillat, France, 80 min.

With Lola Créton, Dominique Thomas

Saturday, March 13, 7:30 pm

Thursday, March 18, 6:15 pm

"Breillat's visually stunning, droll, and, yes, sometimes horrific realization of the tale proved one of the most bracing highlights of 2009's New York Film Festival."--Glenn Kenny, *The Auteurs*

Provoc-auteur Breillat continues her recent turn toward period drama (*THE LAST MISTRESS*) in this slyly subversive take on what is surely one of the most disturbing of all fairy tales. The main body of the story, set in 17th-century France, depicts a willful young woman's decision to avoid the convent by marrying (and mastering) a massive, reputedly murderous nobleman. In the equally perverse modern-day wraparound, a six-year-old girl gleefully terrorizes her squeamish older sister by reading the story aloud to her. In French with English subtitles. Special advance screening courtesy of Strand Releasing. 35mm. (MR)

DISENGAGEMENT

(DÉSENGAGEMENT)

2008, Amos Gitai, France/Israel, 115 min.

With Juliette Binoche, Liron Levo

Sunday, March 21, 5:15 pm

Monday, March 22, 6:00 pm

"Exhilarating...Gitai's strongest entry since KIPPUR."--Ronnie Scheib, *Variety*

Gitai, Israel's most celebrated (and controversial) director, again proves himself a master of integrating intimate personal drama and large political issues with rigorous formal beauty. The first half of the film is set in Avignon, where Israeli policeman Uli (Levo) and his flirtatious French stepsister Ana (Binoche) are reunited by their father's death. The second half follows Ana to Israel where her search for a long-abandoned daughter intersects with the forced removal of Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip--depicted in the stunningly choreographed long takes that are Gitai's trademark. In English, French, Hebrew, and Arabic with English subtitles. Special advance screening courtesy of IFC Films. 35mm. (MR)

For patrons attending the 5:15 pm screening on Sunday, The Alliance Française de Chicago will host a French wine reception prior to the film at 4:00 pm. Un vin d'honneur sera servi par l'Alliance Française de Chicago avant la représentation.
[Include Alliance logo]

FATHER OF MY CHILDREN

(LE PÈRE DE MES ENFANTS)

2009, Mia Hansen-Løve, France, 110 min.

With Louis-Do Lencquesaing, Chiara Caselli

Sunday, March 14, 2:45 pm

Wednesday, March 17, 8:00 pm

"Has brains to spare...guaranteed not to leave a dry eye in the house."--Jonathan Romney, *Screen Daily*

Winner of a French Lumiere Award and a Special Jury Prize at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival, FATHER OF MY CHILDREN charts the desperate final days leading up to the suicide of an artistically adventurous but financially strapped film producer. Given equal time is the deeply moving account of the aftermath, when his wife and three children are left to pick up the pieces and the wife heroically attempts to save his production company. The resonant story is loosely based on the life and death of Humbert Balsan, the highly respected producer of films including Béla Tarr's THE MAN FROM LONDON, and Lars von Trier's MANDERLAY. In French with English subtitles.

Special advance screening courtesy of IFC Films. 35mm. (BS)

FRENCH GIGOLO

(*CLIENTE*)

2008, Josiane Balasko, France, 104 min.

With Nathalie Baye, Eric Caravaca

Sunday, March 7, 3:00 pm

Thursday, March 11, 6:00 pm

"Consistently engaging and never sordid...Baye gives a classy, nuanced performance."--
Lisa Nesselson, *Screen Daily*

Self-sufficient businesswoman Judith (Baye, excellent as usual) likes her sex efficient and impersonal, and she isn't shy about hiring escorts to get it. But things get atypically messy when she becomes involved with a personable gigolo (Caravaca) who is keeping his source of income secret from his loving wife (Isabel Carré). Actor-director Balasko (FRENCH TWIST), who also has a juicy role as Judith's telemarketing sister, displays a gift for balancing comedy with drama and for handling provocative subject-matter without moralism. In French with English subtitles. Special advance screening courtesy of IFC Films. DigiBeta video. (MR)

HADEWIJCH

2009, Bruno Dumont, France, 120 min.

Julie Sokolowski, Yassine Salime

Saturday, March 27, 7:15 pm

Wednesday, March 31, 6:00 pm

"Riveting...one of the [Toronto] fest's must-sees, both timely and personal."--Joshua Rothkopf, *Time Out New York*

Though hardly less provocative than his earlier films (HUMANITÉ, TWENTYNINE PALMS), Dumont's latest work marks a new level of maturity, subtlety, and sympathy for his characters. Devout novice Céline (Sokolowski) is expelled from the convent for excessive self-mortification. Straying from the nest of her wealthy Parisian parents, she befriends a group of ghetto Arabs who lead her on an ambiguous journey from spiritual withdrawal to political engagement. Working riffs on Bresson's MOUCHETTE and Buñuel's VIRIDIANA, the film builds to a startling, beautiful climax. In French with English subtitles. Special advance screening courtesy of IFC Films. 35mm. (MR)

JUST ANYBODY

(LE PREMIER VENU)

2008, Jacques Doillon, France, 121 min.

With Clémentine Beaugrand, Gérald Thomassin

Friday, March 19, 6:00 pm

Wednesday, March 24, 7:45 pm

“It’s wonderful... This intimate story has a soulful, epic grandeur.”--Richard Brody, *The New Yorker*

“A supple and intelligent work that exerts a strange and fascinating pull.”--Patrick McGavin, *Screen*

Always one of the most unclassifiable and unpredictable of French auteurs, Doillon (PONETTE, RAJA) returns to the screen after a five-year absence with this offbeat love story bathed in the harsh winter sunlight of the north coast of France. Irrationally but unshakably devoted to a violent drifter (Thomassin), a young bourgeois woman (Beaugrand) follows him to his seaside hometown, where their relationship is further complicated by the attentions of a local policeman and the presence of the prodigal’s ex-wife and small daughter. Doillon employs a style of intense, fluid long takes that draws impressive results from his little-known young cast. In French with English subtitles. 35mm print courtesy of Cultures France and Cultural Services at the Consulate General of France in Chicago. (MR)

LET IT RAIN

(PARLEZ-MOI DE LA PLUIE)

2008, Agnès Jaoui, France, 110 min.

With Jean-Pierre Bacri, Agnès Jaoui

Friday, March 12, 6:00 pm

Monday, March 15, 6:00 pm

“The film's mixture of smart dialogue, rounded characters and shrewd observation make it a civilized pleasure.”--Allan Hunter, *Screen*

Offscreen and onscreen partners Jaoui (director-writer-actor) and Bacri (writer-actor) have brightened recent French cinema with their witty, emotionally complex ensemble pieces (SAME OLD SONG, THE TASTE OF OTHERS, LOOK AT ME). More predominantly comic than their previous collaborations, LET IT RAIN centers on a famous feminist writer (Jaoui) who decides to run for political office. Returning to her hometown for a much-needed reality check, she unwisely agrees to be the subject of a documentary film by a local journalist (Bacri, especially hilarious) whose incompetence

is matched only by his staggering self-centeredness. In French with English subtitles. Special advance screening courtesy of IFC Films. 35mm. (MR)

OSS 117: LOST IN RIO

(OSS 117: RIO NE RÉPOND PLUS)

2009, Michel Hazanavicius, France, 101 min.

With Jean Dujardin, Louise Monot

Friday, March 26, 6:00 pm

Saturday, March 27, 3:00 pm

"The most entertaining French comedy to hit our shores in some time, and perhaps one of the most enjoyable comedies period."--Caleb Starrenburg, *The Lumière Reader*

Hubert Bonisseur de la Bath, the French superspy of the acclaimed spoof OSS 117: CAIRO, NEST OF SPIES, is back, more complacent and clueless than ever. This time, he is sent to Rio to track down a Nazi war criminal (Wenders veteran Rüdiger Vogler), with a miniskirted Mossad colonel (Monot) at his side to provide fodder for both sexist and anti-Semitic gaffes. Once again, the series' secret weapon is the brilliant comic performing of star Dujardin, who plays the colonialist fool with an impeccable deadpan and just a tiny soupçon of wink. In French with English subtitles. Special advance screening courtesy of Music Box Films. 35mm widescreen. (MR)