



ALAIN DELON IN "PURPLE NOON"

SIXTH ANNUAL CLASSIC **FRENCH** FILM FESTIVAL

JUNE 13-15, 20-22, AND 27-29

Co-presented by Cinema St. Louis, Saint Louis Art Museum, and Webster University Film Series



Travel to France,
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March 16–July 6, 2014

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Claude Monet, French, 1840–1926; *Railroad Bridge, Argenteuil* (detail), 1874;
oil on canvas, 21 3/8 x 28 7/8 inches;
Philadelphia Museum of Art, John G. Johnson Collection, 1917, Cat. 1050

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FRENCH
FILM FESTIVAL**

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CINEMASTLOUIS.ORG

The Sixth Annual Classic French Film Festival celebrates St. Louis' Gallic heritage and France's cinematic legacy. The featured films span the decades from the 1920s through the 1980s (with a particular focus on filmmakers from the New Wave), offering a comprehensive overview of French cinema.

The fest is annually highlighted by significant restorations. We're especially pleased to present a program of recently restored works by the great silent comedian Max Linder. "Be My Wife," the feature in that program, was until recently only available in fragments. Three programs feature 35mm prints: "Lola," "Un Flic," and the long-unavailable "Je t'aime, je t'aime."

The festival again explores France's major contributions to the silent era and pairs the works with live music: The Poor People of Paris accompany the Max Linder feature and short. Every program features introductions and discussions by scholars and critics. The discussions will place the works in the contexts of both film and French history and provide close analyses.

All films are in French with English subtitles.

Admission

\$12 general admission; \$10 for students, Cinema St. Louis members, Saint Louis Art Museum (SLAM) members, and Alliance Française members; Webster U. screenings free for Webster U. students. Advance tickets for Saint Louis Art Museum screenings can be purchased beginning June 3 through MetroTix at metrotix.com and 314-534-1111. Tickets purchased through MetroTix will incur a service fee; the service fee is waived for advance tickets purchased in person at the museum's information centers or box office. For more information, visit slam.org. Advance tickets for Webster U. screenings can be purchased through Brown Paper Tickets at brownpapertickets.com. In the "Find an Event" search box, type "Classic French." A service charge will apply.

Venues

June 13-15 & June 20-22
Saint Louis Art Museum Auditorium
1 Fine Arts Drive, Forest Park

June 27-29
Webster University's Winifred Moore Auditorium
470 E. Lockwood Ave.

**SAINT LOUIS
ART MUSEUM**



Sponsors

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7 PM FRIDAY, JUNE 13, SLAM

Be My Wife

Max Linder, 1921, B&W, 55 min.

With short [Max Wants a Divorce](#), 1917 B&W, 22 min.

Restoration, DVD source

With live musical accompaniment by the Poor People of Paris

The great silent comedian Max Linder (the stage name of Gabriel-Maximilien Leuvielle) was France's rival to Charlie Chaplin, who called him "the great master." One of the first stars to establish a continuing comic persona, Linder introduced his longtime character Max, a high-society dandy, in 1907. By 1912, Linder had taken full control of the filmmaking process – writing, directing, and starring in his own shorts – and in 1916 he was lured to the U.S., where he made both films in this nuptials-themed double bill. In the short "Max Wants a Divorce," the comedian must extricate himself from a marriage to secure an inheritance; in the feature "Be My Wife," Max must instead overcome the objections of a disapproving aunt to wed his beloved.

Tragically, in his later years, Linder suffered from severe depression – perhaps the result of trauma from his World War I service – and he committed suicide in 1925. Because of his career's brevity and relative handful of features, Linder has largely been forgotten outside of his native France. The films in this program thus provide a rare opportunity to see Linder's work on the big screen, an experience further enhanced by live musical accompaniment from Elsie Parker and the Poor People of Paris. The New Yorker describes the "elegant and acrobatic" Linder as "one of the cinema's great prodigies" and declares the newly restored "Be My Wife" – long available only in fragmentary form – his "masterwork."

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Cate Marquis, film critic for the St. Louis Jewish Light and co-founder of the St. Louis Film Critics professional association.

NOON SATURDAY, JUNE 14, SLAM

Band of Outsiders/Bande à part

Jean-Luc Godard, 1964, B&W, 95 min.

Restoration, Blu-ray source

Four years after "Breathless," Jean-Luc Godard re-imagined the gangster film even more radically with "Band of Outsiders," which is celebrating its 50th anniversary. In the film, two restless young men (Sami Frey and

Claude Brasseur) enlist the object of both of their fancies (Godard muse Anna Karina) to help them commit a robbery – in her own home. This audacious and wildly entertaining French New Wave gem is at once sentimental and insouciant, effervescently romantic and melancholy, and it features some of Godard's most memorable set-pieces, including the headlong race through the Louvre and the unshakably cool Madison dance sequence.

Calling the film Godard's "loveliest movie, his tenderest and most accessible," Salon says "Band of Outsiders" is "about the tyranny of living a life of movie-fed fantasies, and while it makes us see the poverty of those fantasies, it also makes them unaccountably rich, poetic, sad." Time Out New York describes the film as "a strange, unceasingly inventive pastiche, and one of his best," and the Village Voice rhapsodizes over Raoul Coutard's "radiant cinematography," declaring that there is "beauty and otherworldliness in its every shade of grey."

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Kathy Corley, professor and chair of the Electronic and Photographic Media Department at Webster University.



2:30 PM SATURDAY, JUNE 14, SLAM

Jules and Jim/Jules et Jim

François Truffaut, 1962, B&W, 106 min.

Restoration, Blu-ray source

Sponsored by Alliance Française de St. Louis

Hailed as one of the finest films ever made, "Jules and Jim" charts, over 25 years, the relationship between two friends and the object of their mutual obsession. The legendary François Truffaut directs, and Jeanne Moreau stars as the alluring and willful Catherine, whose enigmatic smile and passionate nature lure Jules (Oskar Werner) and Jim (Henri Serre) into one of cinema's most captivating romantic triangles. An exuberant and poignant meditation on freedom, loyalty, and the fortitude of love, "Jules and Jim" was a worldwide smash in 1962 and remains every bit as audacious and entrancing today.

"François Truffaut's whirling dervish remains an ageless beauty," writes the Village Voice. "The film appears to us as like a specter, with a sensibility about cinematic language and sexual relations rarely seen today. A better title for this benchmark of the French New Wave might have been 'Breathless' – an apt descriptor for the film's lyrical visual flair and whirlpool of emotions. Too bad it was

already taken." In the Chicago Reader, Dave Kehr declares, "With this 1961 film Truffaut comes closest to the spirit and sublimity of his mentor, Jean Renoir, and the result is a masterpiece of the New Wave."

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Renee Hirshfield, adjunct professor of film studies at Southwestern Illinois College.



1 PM SUNDAY, JUNE 15, SLAM

Mauvais Sang

Leos Carax, 1986, color, 116 min.

Restoration, Blu-ray source

Sponsored by the Centre Francophone at Webster University

Finally receiving a belated U.S. theatrical run, Leos Carax's stunning "Mauvais Sang" (also known by the English-language titles "The Night Is Young" and "Bad Blood") seduces with its poetry and lyricism, dazzles with its plastic richness and polished style. To repay a debt, aging gangsters Marc ("Belle de Jour's" Michel Piccoli) and Hans (Hans Meyer) plan to steal a vaccine for the mysterious STBO virus – a science-fictional counterpart to HIV – which affects those who make love without being in love. When their light-fingered associate dies before the heist, the two accomplices seek a replacement in the deceased's equally dexterous son, magician Alex (longtime Carax collaborator Denis Lavant). Planning to start a new life after leaving his girlfriend (Julie Delpy in her film debut), Alex agrees to join the criminal scheme, but complications arise when he becomes smitten with Marc's young mistress (a luminous Juliette Binoche).

Although now firmly established as one of France's leading filmmakers, Carax ("Holy Motors," "The Lovers on the Bridge") was only 25 when he directed "Mauvais Sang," his second feature. Calling the film "a salute, at once moody and ebullient, to the cinema of the past and the ferocious intensity of youth," the Village Voice asserts that "Mauvais Sang" certified Carax "as the nation's reigning enfant terrible." The Voice writes that although the director "is deeply in thrall to the masters of Nouvelle Vague, particularly Jean-Luc Godard," his "endlessly romantic film transcends homage (and plot, for that matter); above all, his work captures ineffable states of being."

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Lionel Cuillé, the Jane and Bruce Robert professor of French and Francophone studies at Webster University.

7 PM FRIDAY, JUNE 20, SLAM

The Mystery of Picasso/ Le mystère Picasso

Henri-Georges Clouzot, 1957, B&W and color,
78 min.

DVD source

*Sponsored by the Jane M. and Bruce P. Robert
Charitable Foundation*

In 1955, Henri-Georges Clouzot, the acclaimed director of “The Wages of Fear” and “Diabolique,” joined forces with artist Pablo Picasso to make an entirely new kind of documentary, a film that could capture the moment and the mystery of creativity. Together, they devised an innovative technique: The filmmaker placed his camera behind a semi-transparent surface on which the artist drew with special inks that bled through. Clouzot thus captured a perfect reverse image of Picasso’s brushstrokes, and the movie screen itself became the artist’s canvas. For the film, Picasso created, and sometimes obliterated, 20 works (most of them, in fact, destroyed after the shoot). The pieces ranged from playful black-and-white sketches to CinemaScope color murals, with the artworks evolving in minutes through the magic of time-lapse photography.

Exhilarating, mesmerizing, enchanting, and unforgettable, “The Mystery of Picasso” ranks as one of the greatest documentaries on art ever made. The LA Times writes: “Even creative genius can get boring if it becomes repetitive. Clouzot sidesteps that possibility by adding George Auric’s music and changing pace from instant creations to more complex compositions. Soon whole lines and blocks of color and pattern appear in a dazzling parade of visual evolution. This is a film about aesthetic decisions, but they happen so fast that the point is almost lost in the fascinating spectacle.”

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Bradley Bailey, associate professor of art history at St. Louis University.



NOON SATURDAY, JUNE 21, SLAM

Monsieur Hire

Patrice Leconte, 1989, color, 81 min.

DVD source

In a provincial French apartment block, Monsieur Hire (Michel Blanc) endures a solitary life of dull work as a tailor and vitriolic scorn from his neighbors. Hire’s only solace is an occasional night out bowling and his voyeuristic admiration of a neighbor, the ravishing Alice (Sandrine Bonnaire

of “Vagabond”), a beautiful, free-spirited woman conducting a heated love affair through un-drawn curtains across the way. But when police discover the nude body of another young woman in a nearby vacant lot, Hire becomes the prime suspect in a murder investigation that brings him face to face with the object of his desire even as it threatens to ensnare them both in a web of deceit, accusation, lust, and guilt.

Touching, lyrical, erotic, suspenseful, and enigmatic, this psychological drama is both “a twisted love story and a tragic thriller,” according to the London Sunday Times. Adapted from celebrated Belgian crime novelist Georges Simenon’s book by director Patrice Leconte (“Suicide Shop,” “The Widow of Saint-Pierre”), “Monsieur Hire” is a film of gorgeously muted widescreen color and funereal beauty that coolly unpacks sexual obsession and romantic love. Roger Ebert says the film has an intelligence and understated intensity “so delicate that you almost hold your breath for the last half-hour.”

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Calvin Wilson, film, jazz, and dance critic for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.



2:30 PM SATURDAY, JUNE 21, SLAM

Purple Noon/Plein soleil

René Clément, 1960, color, 117 min.

Restoration, Blu-ray source

Sponsored by Les Amis

Alain Delon was at his most impossibly beautiful when “Purple Noon” was released and made him an instant star. This ripe, colorful adaptation of Patricia Highsmith’s vicious novel “The Talented Mr. Ripley,” directed by the versatile René Clément (“Forbidden Games,” “The Damned”), stars Delon as Tom Ripley, a duplicitous American charmer in Rome on a mission to bring his privileged, devil-may-care acquaintance Philippe Greenleaf (Maurice Ronet) back to the United States. What initially seems a carefree tale of friendship soon morphs into a thrilling saga of seduction, identity theft, and murder. Featuring gorgeous location photography of coastal Italy – with especially compelling scenes unfolding aboard Ripley’s yacht – “Purple Noon” is crafted with a light touch that allows it to be at once suspenseful and erotic, and it gave Delon the role of a lifetime.

The Guardian writes: “Delon is terrifically good in the role: his almost unearthly perfection is creepy itself, as if he is imitating a

human being. This is a man, you think, who has grown used to a dazed, rapt expression on the faces of people talking to him, accustomed to their submissive awe, and yet with a diabolical insight into how that magnetism can be harnessed to manipulate and coerce. Delon’s Ripley is a Dorian Gray portrait of male beauty and unscrupulous daring, untroubled by conscience.” And Time Out London observes: “Clément succeeds in making his film as beautiful on the surface and strange and sinister below deck as Ripley himself.”

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Robert Garrick, attorney, board member of the French-preservation nonprofit Les Amis, and former contributor to the davekehr.com film blog.

1 PM SUNDAY, JUNE 22, SLAM

Elena and Her Men/Elena et les hommes

Jean Renoir, 1956, color, 95 min.

Restoration, DVD source

Set amid the military maneuvers and carnivals of turn-of-the-century France, Jean Renoir’s delirious romantic comedy “Elena and Her Men” stars a radiant Ingrid Bergman as a beautiful but impoverished Polish princess who drives men of all stations to fits of desperate love. Among her smitten admirers are handsome lover Henri (Mel Ferrer) and the wealthy boot manufacturer she’s supposed to wed. When Elena elicits the fascination of a famous general (Jean Marais), she finds herself at the center of romantic machinations and political scheming, with the hearts of several men – as well as the future of France – in her hands.

In critic Roger Ebert’s view, the plot of “Elena” is scarcely the point: “The movie is about something else – about Bergman’s rare eroticism, and the way her face seems to have an inner light on film. Was there ever a more sensuous actress in the movies? François Truffaut, reviewing this film, observed that ‘sex is the only focus of attention.’ Renoir’s plot is essentially a farce.... The threads of the story lead to a jolly engagement party in the manufacturer’s mansion, and here Renoir gives us the same sort of jolly, bawdy upstairs-and-downstairs business he had so much fun with in ‘The Rules of the Game.’ The house seems to be a maze of interlocking rooms, through which the manufacturer’s son chases the buxom maid, while Bergman plays hide-and-seek with the general.”

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Andrew Wyatt, film critic for St. Louis Magazine’s Look/Listen arts-and-entertainment blog and the Gateway Cinephile film blog.

7 PM FRIDAY, JUNE 27, WEBSTER U.

Un Flic

Jean-Pierre Melville, 1972, color, 98 min.

New 35mm print

In "Un Flic," piano-playing Edouard (Alain Delon) and nightclub owner Simon (Richard Crenna of "Wait Until Dark" and "Body Heat") both love Kathy (Catherine Deneuve). If that's not trouble enough, Edouard's a post-burnout cop and Simon's bent on the heist of a lifetime, and they seem to be looking past Kathy at each other. Jean-Pierre Melville's final work features iconic performances from the star trio – a never more jadedly detached Delon, a never more chillingly icy Deneuve, and a surprisingly effective, smilingly insinuating Crenna. The film features two trademark Melville heists: the first a near-wordless bank job on a deserted, bleakly rain-sodden seaside street; the second a nerve-shredding, timed-to-the-second drug snatch done via helicopter-to-train transfer.

Former Village Voice critic J. Hoberman writes of the director: "The high priest of tough-guy mysticism and master of the attitudinous gangster thriller, Melville not only anticipated the French new wave but served as a model for the neo new wave of Jim Jarmusch, Quentin Tarantino and Wong Kar-wai." And Time Out New York observes: "With barely a word spoken between them – mostly a series of virile glances – Delon and Crenna paint an idealized portrait of masculine camaraderie, one that's exposed at the end of Melville's bracing last testament as a soul-shattering illusion."

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Diane Carson, professor emerita of film at St. Louis Community College at Meramec and adjunct professor of film studies at Webster University.



6 PM SATURDAY, JUNE 28, WEBSTER U.

Je t'aime, je t'aime

Alain Resnais, 1968, color, 91 min.

New 35mm print

Recovering after a suicide attempt, Claude Ritter (Claude Rich) is obviously the perfect guinea pig for an anonymous corporation's tentative attempts at time travel. What could go wrong? After all, the mouse came out OK. And maybe, when he goes back a year, he can re-live one particular minute. Resnais' switch into science fiction continues his theme of time ("Hiroshima

Mon Amour," "Last Year at Marienbad") as Claude's memories – thanks to the obligatory unaccounted-for glitch – flip back and forth in time in tiny bits and pieces, returning again and again to a Riviera beach and to a bed-sitter in Glasgow, sometimes in alternate and surreal versions. A major influence on Michel Gondry's "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," "Je t'aime, je t'aime" is Resnais' highly experimental attempt to encompass a life totally via non-linear impressionism.

Calling Resnais' work "a magnificent film," the New York Times' Manohla Dargis writes: "In 'Je t'aime, je t'aime,' Claude's journeys into the past resemble nothing less than memory – fragmented, inconstant, taunting, joyous and heartbreaking. We are, the movie reminds us, what we remember, with a consciousness built from reminiscences that flicker, fade and repeat, flicker, fade and repeat. It's no wonder that movies enthrall us! Cinema is a time machine, and, as he has long proved, from 'Last Year at Marienbad' to 'Muriel' and beyond, Mr. Resnais is its ultimate time traveler."

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Robert Hunt, former film critic for the Riverfront Times and former adjunct professor of film studies at Webster University.



8:30 PM SATURDAY, JUNE 28, WEBSTER U.

Judex

Georges Franju, 1963, B&W, 97 min.

Restoration, Blu-ray source

This effortlessly cool crime caper, directed by Georges Franju, is a marvel of dexterous plotting and visual invention. Conceived as an homage to Louis Feuillade's 1916 cult silent serial of the same name, "Judex" kicks off with the mysterious kidnapping of a corrupt banker by a shadowy crime fighter (American magician Channing Pollock) and spins out into a thrillingly complex web of deceptions. Combining stylish '60s modernism with silent-cinema touches and even a few unexpected sci-fi accents, "Judex" is a delightful bit of superhero pulp fiction and a testament to the art of illusion.

The Chicago Reader's Jonathan Rosenbaum observes: "There's a world of difference between the natural, 'found' surrealism of Louis Feuillade's lighthearted French serial (1914) and the darker, studied surrealism and campy piety of this 1964 remake by Georges Franju. Yet in Franju's hands the material has its own magic (and deadpan humor), which makes this one of the better

features of his middle period. Judex (Channing Pollock) is a cloaked hero who abducts a villainous banker to prevent the evil Diana (Francine Bergé in black tights) from stealing a fortune from the banker's virtuous daughter. Some of what Franju finds here is worthy of Cocteau."

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Pier Marton, video artist, former lecturer in the Film and Media Studies Program at Washington U., and self-designated unlearning specialist at the School of No Media.



7 PM SUNDAY, JUNE 29, WEBSTER U.

Lola

Jacques Demy, 1961, B&W, 90 min.

Restoration, 35mm print, print courtesy of Institut Francais

A cigar-smoking man in a Stetson gazes out at the Nantes waterfront, then drives his high-finned American convertible past sailors out on a spree. Dreamer Roland (Marc Michel) eventually wanders into a cabaret where Anouk Aimée's Lola is performing, dressed in an homage to Marlene Dietrich. And then the meetings, link-ups, and unknowing near-misses begin. Jacques Demy's first feature, shot in black-and-white CinemaScope by the great Raoul Coutard, evokes the most artlessly delicate of romantic atmospheres, simultaneously orchestrating repeated patterns, interlocking relationships, and carefully choreographed outrageous coincidences.

The New York Times enthuses: "'Lola' follows a half-dozen ordinary folks in the south of France as they pursue their amorous fantasies, and Demy's style is lighter than air, brazenly artificial. He makes no intellectual demands on the viewer: he aims to seduce, not to challenge. And if you give in to his sweet nothings, you may even feel slightly embarrassed. That's the power of 'Lola.' Alone among the early products of the New Wave, it gives the audience the exquisite sense of surrendering to a guilty pleasure."

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Joe Williams, film critic for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.



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A cut above.

