

The Museum of Modern Art

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FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL:
"Perspectives on French Cinema"
OPENING AT MoMA FEBRUARY 20

Alain Resnais, Claude Lelouch, Michel Blanc, Nelly Kaplan, Olivier Assayas, Thomas Gilou, Fanny Ardant, Wadek Stanczak, and Marianne Basler will be among the French directors and actors present during the twelfth season of recent French films, opening at The Museum of Modern Art on Friday, February 20. Representing both established and new directors, this year's FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL: "Perspectives on French Cinema" features twelve New York premieres and provides an overview of recent developments in French cinema. Mr. Resnais and Ms. Ardant will introduce his film Mélo (1986), recently nominated for the 1987 César for both Best Film and Best Direction, at 6:00 p.m. Ms. Ardant, who stars in the film, is known here primarily for her work with the late François Truffaut. The exhibition continues through March 3.

Among the directors whose works are well-known in the United States are Mr. Resnais (Hiroshima Mon Amour, 1959; Providence, 1976; Mon Oncle d'Amerique, 1980), Claude Lelouch (A Man and a Woman, 1966; And Now My Love, 1974; Cat and Mouse, 1975), Claude Chabrol (Les Cousins, 1959; Le Boucher, 1969; Violette, 1978), and Bertrand Blier (Going Places, 1974; Get Out Your Handkerchiefs, 1977; Ménage, 1986). Based on a 1929 play, Mr. Resnais's Mélo tells the story of a love triangle involving two violinists and a woman, played by Sabine Azéma. In Mr. Lelouch's Partir Revenir (1985), set during the Second World War, Annie Girardot and Jean-Louis Trintignant portray a couple who hide their Jewish friends, played by Michel Piccoli and Françoise

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Fabian, who are subsequently denounced. Jean Poiret, Jean-Claude Brialy, and Bernadette Lafont star in Mr. Chabrol's Inspecteur Lavardin (1986), a murder mystery in which Mr. Poiret reprises his detective role from the director's 1985 Poulet au Vinaigre. Mr. Blier's Notre Histoire (1984), a film about obsession, stars Alain Delon and Nathalie Baye as two strangers who begin their affair on a train.

Other directors in the series whose earlier works have been shown in this country are Nelly Kaplan (A Very Curious Girl, 1967) and Jacques Doillon (La Drôlesse, 1978). Ms. Kaplan's Abel Gance et Son Napoléon (1984) was presented at the 1984 Cannes Film Festival. A former assistant and close collaborator of Mr. Gance, Ms. Kaplan creates a documentary using original footage from Gance's 1927 Napoléon and material from the director's production log. Mr. Doillon's La Puritaine (1986) stars Sandrine Bonnaire, known in this country for Agnès Varda's Vagabond (1986). She plays a young runaway who decides to be reunited with her father, a theater director portrayed by Michel Piccoli.

Four first features are included in the exhibition. Marche à l'Ombre (1985), about the adventures of two unemployed buddies in Paris and on the road, was directed by and costars Michel Blanc, who won the award for Best Actor at the 1986 Cannes Film Festival for his role in Ménage. Mr. Blanc's directorial debut, a box-office success, marked the commercial breakthrough of films from the "café-théâtre" movement that revolutionized French comedy and introduced a new generation of actors. Olivier Assayas's Désordre (1986) describes the dissolution of a group of young musicians who inadvertently commit a murder and attempt to erase it from memory. The film, which won the International Critics Prize at the 1986 Venice Film Festival, stars Wadeck

Stanczak, who appears in André Techiné's Scene of the Crime (1986).

Mr. Assayas, who is a critic for Cahiers du Cinéma, wrote the screenplay for his film and Techiné's recent features Rendez-vous (1985) and Scene of the Crime. Thomas Gilou's Black Mic Mac (1986), which enjoyed a wide popularity in France, is a comedy about the battle between a group of African immigrants and the Parisian health authorities. Monique Dartonne and Michel Kaptur's High Speed (1986) involves a film editor from Paris and an expatriate American photojournalist who unwittingly become engaged in espionage.

Two veteran directors represented in the series whose works are well-known in France are Jacques Rozier and Paul Vecchiali. Mr. Rozier, noted in this country for the seminal film Adieu Phillipine (1962), wrote, directed, and coedited the 1986 Jean Vigo Prize winner Maine Océan (1986). The film begins on the Maine Océan Express train that runs between Paris and Brittany. Its loose narrative involves the interaction of four characters, including two train inspectors, a Brazilian samba dancer, and a young woman lawyer. Mr. Vecchiali, who has been making films since 1961, directed Rosa la Rose (1986), about a young prostitute played by newcomer Marianne Basler, nominated for the 1987 César for Most Promising Young Actress. The director's Drugstore Romance (1979) was presented in the 1980 NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS series.

La Societé des Réalisateurs des Films originally established "Perspectives on French Cinema" in 1973 as a special section of the Cannes Film Festival. Since that time the exhibition has been presented annually in New York by the French Film Office/Unifrance U.S.A.

A complete schedule of the exhibition is enclosed. The FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL: "Perspectives on French Cinema" has been organized for the Museum by Laurence Kardish and Adrienne Mancina, curators, Department of Film, in association with Unifrance Film International, Gilbert de Goldschmidt, president; Alain Boismary, délégué général; and Jacques Poitrenaud, délégué général adjoint, and the French Film Office/Unifrance U.S.A., Catherine Verret, director. The exhibition is presented with the cooperation of the Cultural Services of the French Embassy.

The FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL: "Perspectives on French Cinema" is sponsored by Le Parker Méridien, New York; Air France; Crédit Lyonnais/U.S. Branches; Grand Marnier Foundation; Cartier; Jean Laporte, Paris Parfums; Michelin Tire Corporation; and Louis Vuitton.

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For further press information and photographic materials, contact Howard Feinstein, film press representative, The Museum of Modern Art, 212/708-9752.