

The Museum of Modern Art

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FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL 1988:
"Perspectives on French Cinema"
OPENING AT MoMA APRIL 8

Nathalie Baye, Josiane Balasko, Isaach de Bankolé, Jean-Claude Brialy, Alain Jessua, Patrice Leconte, Jean-Charles Tacchella, Agnès Varda, and Ariel Zeitoun are among the French directors and actors who will be present during FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL 1988: "Perspectives on French Cinema," opening at The Museum of Modern Art on April 8 and continuing through April 24.

Representing both established and new directors, the series features eleven New York premieres and provides an overview of recent developments in French cinema. This year's festival includes the first New York retrospective of Louis Malle's French films (see accompanying release and schedule).

On Friday, April 8, at 6:00 p.m., Patrice Laconte's Tandem (1987) will open the festival. This highly successful film was nominated for "Best Film," "Best Director," and twice for "Best Actor" (Jean Rochefort and Gérard Jugnot) at the 1988 César Awards.

Directors represented in the festival whose works are well known to American audiences include Claude Chabrol (Les Bonnes Femmes, 1960; Les Biches, 1968; La Femme infidèle, 1968; Violette, 1978), André Téchiné (Rendez-vous, 1986; Scene of the Crime, 1986), Agnès Varda (Cleo de 5 à 7, 1962; Le Bonheur, 1966; L'Une chante, l'Autre pas/One Sings, The Other Doesn't, 1977; Sans Toit Ni loi/Vagabond, 1985), and Jean-Charles Tacchella (Cousin, Cousine, 1975; Escalier C/Staircase C, 1985).

Two masters of the psychological thriller join forces in Claude Chabrol's adaptation of a Patricia Highsmith novel, Le Cri du Hibou/Cry of the Owl

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(1987). The film stars Christophe Malavoy and Mathilda May; May's dramatic screen debut earned her the 1988 César for "Best Female Newcomer."

Téchiné's Les Innocents (1988), nominated as "Best Film" for the 1988 César, stars Sandrine Bonnaire (Vagabond, 1986), who plays a young woman involved with two young men whose intense dislike of one another leads to tragedy. Jean-Claude Brialy's portrayal of a cynical orchestra conductor earned him the 1988 César for "Best Supporting Actor." Brialy has starred in key New Wave and mainstream films since 1958, and has directed several features of his own.

Birkin Double Jeu Varda I and II is described by director Varda as "two parts of a diptych dedicated to Jane Birkin." This is the latest work by Varda, who in 1954 with La Pointe Courte anticipated the Nouvelle Vague. Jane B. par Agnès V. (1987) is a cinematic collage of Birkin in her diverse roles, from Calamity Jane and Marilyn Monroe to Stan Laurel. In Kung Fu Master (1987), a forty-year old divorcée falls in love with a fourteen-year old (Mathieu Demy) whose passion is video games. Both films opened in Paris in March after their showing at the Berlin Film Festival.

Tacchella's Travelling Avant (1987) is an affectionate and fictionalized chronicle about a group of young film enthusiasts who want to start their own film club, much like the group who became the filmmakers of the New Wave. Thierry Frémont, winner of the 1988 César for "Best Male Newcomer," Simon de la Brosse, and Ann Gisel Glass star.

The French cinema's continuing passion for film noir and policiers is evidenced in this year's festival selections. In Poussière d' Ange/Killing Time (1987), Edouard Niermans's second feature, an alcoholic detective becomes involved with a young and vengeful woman. This atmospheric and flamboyant noir

stars Bernard Giraudeau and newcomer Fanny Bastien. Niermans's first feature, Anthracite (1980), was included in "Perspectives on French Cinema" at MoMA in 1981. Dominique Lavanant earned a 1988 César for "Best Supporting Actress" in Jean-Pierre Mocky's twenty-ninth feature, Agent Trouble (1987), a film that begins with the disappearance of a busload of tourists in the Pyrénées. Catherine Deneuve, recipient of a 1988 César nomination for "Best Actress," and Richard Bohringer star.

Ariel Zeitoun's second feature, Saxo (1988), a jazz thriller, stars Gérard Lanvin as a struggling music producer in Paris who signs Richard Brooks and Akosua Busia (The Color Purple, 1985) playing brother and sister as an obscure American jazz duo, only to discover that the excellent saxophonist is very disturbed and dangerous. Alain Jessua, a filmmaker whose works have been well known to French audiences since 1964, when he made La Vie à l'envers/Life Upside Down, directs Michel Serrault (King of Hearts, 1966; La Cage aux folles, 1979) and Nathalie Baye (Le Retour de Martin Guerre, 1981; La Balance, 1982; J'ai épousé une ombre/I Married a Shadow, 1982) in En Toute Innocence (1988), a film involving adultery and a deadly cat-and-mouse game between a father-in-law and daughter-in-law. An unlikely pair of detectives are the protagonists of Josiane Balasko's 1987 social comedy Les Keufs, a film in which the former café-théâtre comedienne also stars. Isaach de Bankolé, star of the 1986 Black Mic Mac, plays her professional partner and love interest, and Jean-Pierre Léaud, best known to American filmgoers for his work with Truffaut, is her excitable superior.

As with Balasko, director Patrice Leconte and actor Gérard Jugnot have emerged from the café-théâtre movement that revolutionized French comedy and introduced a new generation of actors including Michel Blanc, Dominique

Lavanant, and Thierry Lhermitte. In Tandem (1987), Leconte directs Jean Rochefort and Jugnot in a moving portrait of a testy professional relationship that proves to be a deep friendship between two radio men: one is the longtime star of a quiz show traveling across France, the other his general assistant.

A complete schedule of the exhibition is enclosed. FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL 1988: "Perspectives on French Cinema" has been organized for the Museum by Laurence Kardish and Adrienne Mancía, curators in the Department of Film; in association with Unifrance Film International, Gilbert de Goldschmidt, president, and Alain Boismery, délégué général; and the French Film Office/Unifrance U.S.A., Catherine Verret, director. The series is presented with the cooperation of the Cultural Services of the French Embassy.

FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL 1988: "Perspectives on French Cinema" is sponsored by Hotel Parker Meridien; Air France; Grand Marnier Foundation; CIC-Union Européenne, Intl. et Cie.; Louis Vuitton; Givenchy Parfums, Inc.; Christofle; Michelin Tire Corporation; and Jean Laporte Paris Parfums.

Each film in the series, except the diptych Birkin Double Jeu Varda I and II, is presented twice. Weekday screenings are at 6:30 and 9:00 p.m.; weekends at 6:00 and 8:30 p.m. The later evening screenings have been arranged to make the premieres more accessible to the public. Admission is charged for this part of the program, with advance tickets available at the information desk in the Museum's lobby (no phone or mail orders): \$5.00 general, \$3.50 members, \$2.50 students. Call 212/708/9490 for daily film listings.

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For further film press information, contact the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750, or Jeffrey Wise, consultant, 212/460-8373.