

FILM FORUM

A NON-PROFIT CINEMA SINCE 1970 209 WEST HOUSTON ST. NEW YORK, NY 10014 BOX OFFICE: (212) 727-8110

INDEPENDENT PREMIERES & CLASSICS

FEB/MARCH 2022



LIMITED
RUN

OPENS FEBRUARY 4

LINGUI, THE SACRED BONDS

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY MAHAMAT-SALEH HAROUN

In this timely, cathartic drama, Chadian filmmaker Mahamat-Saleh Haroun (**A SCREAMING MAN**) elevates the saying "It takes a village" to a profound and even sacred necessity. When her 15-year-old daughter becomes pregnant, a single mother's shame and conflict swiftly transform into fierce maternal determination. The pair's harrowing quest to secure an abortion potentially expands to a web of resilient women (here *lingui* refers to collective resistance in the face of catastrophic odds) as Haroun melds sober reality with gorgeous visual storytelling: "Ravishingly shot. Against the sandy sun-scorched urban landscape...the blazing hues and hyperactive patterns of the women's clothing don't merely serve as ornamental contrast, but signify resurgent life and feeling. Even a kindly midwife's quarters are painted in vast, electric expanses of cyan and ultramarine. In LINGUI, women's freedoms are sometimes asserted in secret, but they don't fade into the background." — Guy Lodge, *Variety*. This superb African film infuses both thought and feeling into a subject that our own nation continues to struggle with 50 years after abortion was declared legal by the Supreme Court.

87 MINS. CHAD/FRANCE/GERMANY/BELGIUM 2021 MUBI

OPENS FEBRUARY 11

PLAYGROUND

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY LAURA WANDEL

72 MINS. BELGIUM FILM MOVEMENT

WHEN WE WERE BULLIES

DIRECTED BY JAY ROSENBLATT

36 MINS. USA

An immersion into the war zone/school yard: **PLAYGROUND** follows 7-year-old Nora (Maya Vanderbeque, in a standout performance), a witness to her older brother Abel's torment by bullies. Abel forbids her from reporting it to the principal, and Nora fears that telling her father would only make things worse. Belgian director Laura Wandel, in a striking feature debut, shoots at a child's-eye level, plunging us into a self-contained universe in which some kids enjoy games while others dread every tense moment. "A gut-punch of a film. Spot-on cinematic choices" — Lisa Nesselson, *Screen Daily*. Accompanied by Jay Rosenblatt's **WHEN WE WERE BULLIES**: a filmmaker's investigation into his role in a 5th grade bullying incident at a Sheepshead Bay public school over 50 years ago. A heady mix of archival footage, personal reflections, and interviews with key figures (including their teacher).

LIMITED
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Programming is made possible, in part, by the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.



Council on
the Arts

NYC Cultural
Affairs



FEBRUARY 11 – MARCH 10
**FOUR WEEKS
33 FILMS**



**TOSHIRO
MIFUNE**

CO-PRESENTED WITH
JAPAN FOUNDATION

WE THANK THEM FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT.

For movie lovers around the world, TOSHIRO MIFUNE (1920 – 1997) remains the lone warrior slashing his way to glory — both Japan's John Wayne and the prototype for Clint Eastwood. But in the way he revolutionized post-war screen acting with his emotional nakedness, he was also Marlon Brando; in the way he encompassed titanic, complex, classical roles, he was Laurence Olivier. With his towering presence and seemingly endless range, there was, simply, no one like him. The 33 films in this series include Mifune's 16 collaborations with director Akira Kurosawa — “the greatest actor-director partnership in film history” (David Shipman) — along with 35mm rarities and rediscoveries imported from the libraries of The Japan Foundation and The National Film Archive of Japan.

including

**SEVEN SAMURAI • RASHOMON • THRONE OF BLOOD • A WIFE'S HEART • THE HIDDEN FORTRESS • HIGH AND LOW
YOJIMBO • DRUNKEN ANGEL • RED SUN • THE BAD SLEEP WELL • SAMURAI REBELLION
DUEL AT ICHIJOGI TEMPLE • SAMURAI ASSASSIN • ALL ABOUT MARRIAGE • STRAY DOG • SWORD OF DOOM**

LIMITED
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OPENS FEBRUARY 18

THE AUTOMAT

PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY LISA HURWITZ

Iconic, elegant, and populist all at once: the *Automat* (aka Horn & Hardart) revolutionized American dining a century ago, long before there was fast food or hipster coffee shops. An eclectic mix of New Yorkers inserted nickels into slots, and slices of lemon meringue pie, mac & cheese, baked beans, and creamed spinach magically appeared from a grid of gleaming chrome windows. Then there was the eatery's signature 5-cent coffee, cascading from ornate dolphin-headed spouts. Mel Brooks (who sings an homage he wrote specifically for the film), Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Colin Powell, Carl Reiner, and others pay effusive tribute to this communal Art Deco home away from home. Says Brooks: “You didn’t need a lot of money. You needed a lot of nickels.” Debut filmmaker Lisa Hurwitz collages rare artifacts, images, and memorabilia (including personal photos and deeply affectionate stories from former employees and the founding families) to create a love letter to a New York many of us still remember.

79 MINS. USA



LIMITED
RUN

OPENS MARCH 4

GREAT FREEDOM

DIRECTED BY SEBASTIAN MEISE



Franz Rogowski, Germany's answer to Joaquin Phoenix, is all wiry, *jolie laide*, smoldering intensity. He stars as Hans, a gay man who, after surviving a Nazi concentration camp, lands repeatedly in West German prisons

for the crime of homosexuality. Paragraph 175, the criminal code dating back to 1871 (in effect until 1994), is the lynchpin for what Austrian director Sebastian Meise calls “a prison drama and a love story.” Toggling through three eras (1945, 1957, 1968), Hans's relationship with Viktor, a convicted murderer, becomes increasingly complicated and moving. A multi-prize winner in Europe, the film has been called “a perceptive character study about resistance and resilience, buoyed by Rogowski's impeccable performance” (Gary Kramer, *Salon*) and “an exquisite marriage of personal, political and sensual storytelling... (with) another performance of quietly piercing vulnerability from Rogowski” (Guy Lodge, *Variety*).

116 MINS. AUSTRIA / GERMANY MUBI

With support from the R.G. Riffkind Foundation Endowment for Queer Cinema

MARCH 11 – 17

“A CHARGED, CLAUSTROPHOBIC FEVER DREAM OF PRIVILEGE, POWER AND PERVERSION.”

– Time Out

JOSEPH LOSEY’S THE SERVANT

SCREENPLAY BY HAROLD PINTER NEW 4K RESTORATION

(1963) Upper crust James Fox thinks he’s found a “treasure” in new butler Dirk Bogarde — just the man to put his life and swanky Knightsbridge townhouse in order — though his frightfully stuck-up fiancée Wendy Craig sniffs disapprovingly. But after Bogarde’s mini-skirted “sister” Sarah Miles suddenly shows up on Fox’s doorstep, the line of demarcation between Upstairs and Downstairs blurs. American blacklisted Losey’s pioneering psychodrama was his first collaboration with playwright Harold Pinter. “Gay sexuality is everywhere and nowhere in this movie, and Pinter’s sleek, indirect dialogue hints at suppressed and unacknowledged desire... It is a brilliant, subversive account of class relations and the changing times.” — Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*

116 MINS. UNITED KINGDOM RIALTO PICTURES

Restored in 4K in 2021 by StudioCanal at Silversalt Film Lab, from an original negative.

With support from the R.G. Riffkind Foundation Endowment for Queer Cinema



OPENS MARCH 11

PLAYING IN THE FM BAND: THE STEVE POST STORY

PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY ROSEMARIE REED

“Just when you think you’ve scraped the bottom, you find you’ve only scraped the surface,” opined Steve Post (1944 – 2014), the brilliant, sardonic WBAI (and later WNYC) radio host whose voice was a familiar tonic during Watergate, the Vietnam War, the Nixon era, and beyond. Like Capote and Mailer, creators of the nonfiction novel, Post personalized the political and politicized the personal — pioneering freeform radio by improvising self-deprecating stories drawn from his childhood, page one of *The New York Times*, or (his personal nemesis) Richard Nixon (“Give him the shaft”). Some of his favorite guests: Abbie Hoffman, Paul Krassner (publisher of *The Realist*), Marshall Efron, Marilyn Sokol, and John Lithgow. Filmmaker Rosemarie Reed recreates a time when this curmudgeonly comic genius turned radio into a medium that was of the moment: both endlessly entertaining and profoundly enlightening. Plus he was very, very funny.

90 MINS. USA

With support from the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation Fund

MARCH 18 – 24

“ONE OF LOSEY’S MOST PERSONAL, CEREBRAL AND ARRESTING WORKS.”

– David Robinson

JOSEPH LOSEY’S MR. KLEIN

STARRING ALAIN DELON NEW 4K RESTORATION

(1976) In Occupied Paris, Alain Delon’s Catholic art dealer Klein seems to be sitting pretty, with an apartment full of expensive paintings, sculpture, and tapestries bought at fire sale prices from Jews eager to flee. But when a Jewish newspaper is delivered to his doorstep, the protests and desperate search for his Aryan heritage begin, so desperate that he begins a frenzied search for his Jewish *doppelgänger*. Received coldly by French audiences, who objected to its depiction of wartime collaboration, MR. KLEIN still went on to win three Césars: Best Film, Director, and Production Design. “A slow-burning French thriller... Suffused not only with history, but also with echoes of Kafka, Dostoyevsky and the clipped paranoia of Losey’s Pinter collaborations.” — Ben Kenigsberg, *The New York Times*

123 MINS. FRANCE RIALTO PICTURES

Presented with support from the George Fasel Memorial Fund for Classic French Cinema. Restored in 4K in 2021 by StudioCanal at Hiventy laboratory, Joinville, with support of the CNC.

With support from the Joan S. Constantiner Fund for Jewish and Holocaust Films



OPENS MARCH 18

INTREGALDE

DIRECTED BY RADU MUNTEAN

Muddy roads, a car that gives up in a remote region, and an eclectic group of well-meaning urbane young people: Acclaimed Romanian filmmaker Radu Muntean (TUESDAY, AFTER CHRISTMAS) delicately pulls us into the alternately cavalier, paranoiac, and cynical mindset of a group of would-be humanitarians attempting to deliver aid when their SUV lands in a ditch amid an ever-darkening forest. Meeting up with a grizzled local asking for a ride to a sawmill, they bicker and confront their own limits of trust and goodwill: Is he a senile, benevolent soul? Or is he craftily leading them to their doom? "Fantastic. Uncannily gripping tragicomedy...a mordantly witty, keen-eyed, expertly performed delight." — Jessica Kiang, *Variety*

104 MINS. ROMANIA GRASSHOPPER FILM



MARCH 25 – 31

"A revelation... Easily one of the greatest and most insightful films ever made about the British working class."

— *Sight & Sound*

LIMITED RUN

BARNEY PLATTS-MILLS' BRONCO BULLFROG

NEW RESTORATION



(1970) 17-year-old welder's apprentice and petty thief Del (Del Walker), a product of London's overcrowded East End slums, relieves the boredom by helping his fresh-out-of-Borstal pal "Bronco Bullfrog" (Sam Shepherd) clean out an idle freight train. But what he really longs for is some impossible-to-find time alone with his 15-year-old girlfriend (Anne Gooding). Largely improvised by a cast of non-pro teens (cast from the legendary workshops of Joan Littlewood, "the Mother of Modern Theatre"), Platts-Mills' long-unseen

debut foreshadows the Punk Rock ethos of the 1970s. "A rumble-tumble East End picaresque... Today it stands as a forgotten time piece, a rebel in exile. Few films have highlighted the class war at the heart of British cinema so pointedly. Few have suffered so ignominious a fate.... Platts-Mills rustles up a brisk, bracing, slice-of-life drama, a casual portrait of late-60s 'suedeheads' kicking their heels and dreaming of escape. The directing is rough and ready; the performances are a little rude and unschooled. In the end, of course, that's all part of the appeal." — Xan Brooks, *The Guardian*

87 MINS. UNITED KINGDOM A SEVENTY-SEVEN RELEASE

Restored from the original 35mm negative by the British Film Institute, under the supervision of director Barney Platts-Mills.

SELECTED SCREENINGS IN MARCH AND APRIL



BUSTER'S CENTURY

♫ FEATURING LIVE PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT BY STEVE STERNER

Joseph "Buster" Keaton (1895 – 1966) was not only one of the cinema's greatest comedians.

He's also widely considered one of its finest directors, hailed by Orson Welles as "a supreme artist." This festival of Buster's greatest silent comedy features, plus some of his funniest and most brilliantly inventive shorts, includes 15 restored Keaton classics from Lobster Films, Paris.

Special thanks to Serge Bromberg and Maria Chiba of Lobster Films.

11 FEATURES and 6 SHORTS, INCLUDING

THE GENERAL • STEAMBOAT BILL JR.
SEVEN CHANCES • SHERLOCK JR. • GO WEST
THE NAVIGATOR • COLLEGE • THE THREE AGES
SPITE MARRIAGE • THE CAMERAMAN

Opening weekend screenings (March 5 and 6) introduced by James Curtis, author of the definitive new biography *Buster Keaton: A Filmmaker's Life* (Knopf).