A drama based on the true story of Hiroo Onoda, the legendary Japanese soldier who spent 30 years in the Philippine jungle, refusing to surrender because he was convinced World War II had not ended. Camouflaged by leaves and bark, shooting water buffalo for sustenance, Onoda will not believe even the recordings of his brother’s voice, imploring him to give up, or the magazine articles left for him in the jungle, meant to enlighten him about a world that had changed dramatically since 1944. (His response: paranoid conspiracy theories about the enemy concocting fake news.) Was Onoda a self-deluded fanatic or a paragon of patriotism? Harari’s poignant, epic drama reveals the complexities of the man who became a modern myth — and the inspiration for Werner Herzog’s recently published novel, The Twilight World.

173 MIN. FRANCE / JAPAN  DARK STAR PICTURES

“Fearless and mesmerizing, sometimes scary, sometimes freakish, Isabelle Huppert has taken on an astonishment of roles over her career, moving effortlessly from tears to shrieks, from the straightest stories to the most gloriously unhinged. She’s acted in more than 50 movies this century alone, industriousness that speaks to her ambition and popularity, but also suggests a ravenous hunger that you can see in her acting... Her characters boil over with life.” — Manohla Dargis, The New York Times

Programmed by Vincent Katz, Elspeth Carroll & Bruce Goldstein

With generous support from Maureen A. Hayes and Kevin R. Parks
“History has taught Chinese people a lesson: Dare to stand up to the Party, and you will suffer.” — Daxiong, famed comics artist (Justice League of America and Star Wars). This year marks the 20th anniversary of Falun Gong’s daring hijacking of a Chinese state television station. For decades, Beijing has branded Falun Gong as a dangerous cult, but its members maintain that it is a spiritual movement based on moral teachings and meditation, with roots in Buddhism. In the 1990s they had tens of millions of adherents in China; in 1999, the government banned the movement. Using elegant, dazzling animation by Daxiong (himself a Falun Gong adherent), ETERNAL SPRING tells the astonishing true story of the movement’s TV station takeover. For those who know Falun Gong only as the publisher of the right-wing paper The Epoch Times, this film will be an eye-opener, an inspiring portrait of high-tech group defiance in the face of overwhelming state oppression, brutality, and misinformation.

96 MIN. CANADA LOFTY SKY ENTERTAINMENT

With support from the Richard Brick, Geri Ashur, and Sara Bershtel Fund for Social Justice Documentaries

“The air in Delhi is so toxic and inhospitable to life itself that birds regularly fall from the sky like feathered rain. The creatures have done their best to compensate for other symptoms of pollution — one species began singing to each other at a higher pitch in order to pierce through the industrial noise, while another started using discarded cigarette butts as parasite repellent... ALL THAT BREATHES (is) a vital and transfixing work of urban ecology about two Muslim brothers who share an uncommonly holistic perspective of the world around them.” (David Ehrlich, IndieWire) Looking to the skies for a sense of release and purpose, they find the majestic black kite, an ecologically vital bird of prey, for whom they run a basement triage center; as meat-eaters, the birds are rejected by the city’s bird hospitals. A documentary paean to these brothers’ passion, tenacity, and tender concern for a bird more common than the NYC pigeon. ALL THAT BREATHES is the only film to be awarded both the Grand Jury Prize in World Documentary Competition (Sundance) and the L’Œil d’or documentary prize (Cannes).

94 MIN. INDIA / USA / UK SIDESHOW / SUBMARINE DELUXE

“A work of astonishing power and simplicity, reminiscent of the finest Italian neo-realist films.” — Los Angeles Times

“A small jewel you must try to see.” —Derek Malcolm, The Guardian

“Nourimand’s performance is one of the finest ever given by a child.” — Los Angeles Times

AMIR NADERI’S THE RUNNER

(1984) An illiterate 11-year-old orphan (Madjid Nourimand), living alone in an abandoned tanker in the Iranian port city of Abadan, survives by shining shoes, selling water, and diving for deposit bottles, while being bullied by both adults and competing older kids. But he finds solace by dreaming about departing cargo ships and airplanes and by running...seemingly to nowhere. Often compared to De Sica’s SHOESHINE (and other great works of Italian Neo-Realism), Buñuel’s LOS OLVIDADOS, Hector Babenco’s PIXOTE, and Truffaut’s THE 400 BLOWS, Naderi’s tenth feature film — inspired by his own childhood — has been cited as the beginning of the post-revolutionary Iranian New Wave and its first masterpiece.

94 MIN. IRAN RIALTO PICTURES
UTAMA
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ALEJANDRO LOAYZA GRISI
The language of love for an elderly Quechua couple living in the starkly sublime Bolivian highlands is gesture, silence, and the tender facial expressions of two people as intimate with each other’s wants and worries as they are with the drought threatening their livelihood. Barbara Alvarez’s cinematography sets the vibrant colors of domestic life against arresting widescreen tracking shots of rural Bolivia’s cracked earth and a (stunningly photogenic) herd of llamas. The search for water, a health crisis, and a city-born grandson’s pressure to abandon their ranch and way of life converge in this moving drama of devotion and survival. “Meditative and deeply romantic. Rarely has the [climate] crisis been addressed as organically — or with quite so many llamas.” — Marya E. Gates, RogerEbert.com
87 MIN.     BOLIVIA / URUGUAY / FRANCE  KINO LORBER  With support from the Robert E. Appel Fund for Spanish and Portuguese Language Film

A COUPLE  DIRECTED BY FREDERICK WISEMAN
“All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” Leo Tolstoy’s famed opening to Anna Karenina easily applies to the early years of his deliriously passionate marriage to a woman 16 years his junior, as well as to their final years, marked by violent arguments, guilt, and recriminations. Prolific documentary maestro Frederick Wiseman (46 feature-length films since 1967) has fashioned a moving, empathetic monologue based on the diaries of Sophia Tolstoy, with whom the great writer had 13 children and who, as his amanuensis, copied his masterpiece, War and Peace, seven times. Filmed amid gorgeous, idyllic settings befitting a Russian countess, French actress Nathalie Boutefeu portrays Sophia as a determined, loving, angry woman who recognizes the limitations of long-term marriage to a man of world-renown. In the words of Olivia Harrison (wife of George Harrison): “The secret to long-term marriage? You don’t get divorced.”

NEW WAVES
REDISCOVERING TAIWANESE CINEMA OF THE 1980s
One of the wonders of late-20th-century world cinema was the sudden wave of remarkably talented directors who emerged in Taiwan during the 1980s, an incredible efflorescence that swiftly reinvented a national cinema. Yet, despite the international acclaim given to the leading directors of the so-called New Taiwan Cinema, the larger body of their work has rarely been screened outside their own country. This festival includes now classic films by such iconic figures as Edward Yang, Hou Hsiao-hsien, and Wu Nien-jen, as well as milestones largely unseen outside of Taiwan — including major discoveries of films by Chang Yi, Wang Tung, and Chen Kun-ho.
Many of the prints in this series will be imported from Taiwan especially for the festival.
MORE THAN 15 FILMS, INCLUDING...
DUST IN THE WIND  TAIPEI STORY  THE SANDWICH MAN  IN OUR TIME  GROWING UP  PUSHING HANDS  REBELS OF THE NEON GOD  and more
Programmed by Haden Guest  Series Consultant: Wayne Wang
With generous support from the Taipei Cultural Center of TECO in New York
“Does the cinema have room for two art house donkey movies in its repertoire? Robert Bresson’s 1966 AU HASARD BALTHAZAR is the other great donkey film, but it’s a different, ahem, beast. Whereas Bresson used his animal as means to observe shades of human frailty and cruelty in provincial France, Skolimowski...fill(s) his movie with breathtaking imagery atop a minimalist narrative.” (Jordan Mintzer, The Hollywood Reporter) The visually spectacular, often surreal odyssey of Eo, a winsome gray donkey (played by six different donkeys), is a long, strange trip: from a Polish circus where he is adored (and liberated by animal rights activists) to a horse farm (from which he escapes), to briefly becoming the mascot of a soccer team, and to points beyond. “EO is an animal film that stands defiantly on its own hooves, marked out by a potent emotional charge, very contemporary eco-consciousness, and filmmaking that at its best fairly sizzles in its strangeness.” — Jonathan Romney, Screen International

88 MIN. POLAND / UK / ITALY SIDESHOW / JANUS FILMS

WIM WENDERS’
PARIS, TEXAS
STARRING HARRY DEAN STANTON, NASTASSJA KINSKI
SCREENPLAY BY SAM SHEPARD

(1984) “A defiantly individual film, about loss and loneliness and eccentricity. The characters in this movie come out of the imagination of Sam Shepard, the playwright of rage and alienation, and Wenders, a West German director who often makes ‘road movies,’ in which lost men look for answers in the vastness of great American cities. The lost man is played this time by Harry Dean Stanton, the most forlorn and angry of all great American character actors. We never do find out what personal cataclysm led to his walk in the desert … PARIS, TEXAS is more concerned with exploring emotions than with telling a story. The images in the film show people framed by the vast, impersonal forms of modern architecture; the cities seem as empty as the desert did in the opening sequence… It is true, deep, and brilliant.” — Roger Ebert

147 MIN. U.S. JANUS FILMS

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