

# FILM FORUM

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Calendar Programmed by Karen Cooper and Mike Maggione



JANUARY 20 – FEBRUARY 2 2 WEEKS



## BLEAK STREET

DIRECTED BY ARTURO RIPSTEIN

MEXICO / SPAIN 2015 99 MINS. IN SPANISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES LEISURE TIME FEATURES

**Veteran auteur and master of the Mexican bizarre, Arturo Ripstein (DEEP CRIMSON)** — an influence on a generation of his country's directors — plunges into a Mexico City demimonde of crime, prostitution, and luchador wrestling. The film's luscious black-and-white cinematography recounts a true crime story of twin mini-luchadores (who *never* remove their masks), the mother who adores them, and two prostitutes whose best days are long behind them. Ripstein imbues his Buñuelian tableaux with both empathy and dark humor. "A lunatic swirl into the hopes, kinks, and day-to-day hustle of a handful of Mexico City characters so colorful, the pic's black-and-white cinematography merely amplifies their eccentricities. Between its pint-sized pugilists, cross-dressing philanderers and desperate old whores, this carnivalesque group portrait might easily be mistaken for some lost Fellini project, were it not for the twist that this phantasmagoric true-crimer wasn't dreamed up by its director...but pulled from the pages of the local newspaper." — Peter Debruge, *Variety*

12:30, 2:40, 4:50, 7:10, 9:25

FEBRUARY 3 – 16 2 WEEKS

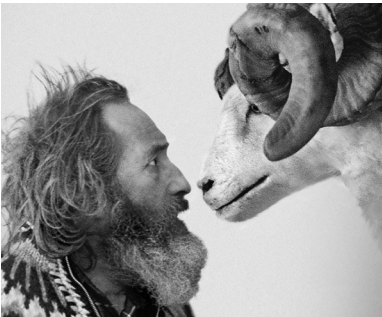
## RAMS

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY GRÍMUR HÁKONARSON

ICELAND 2015 93 MINS. IN ICELANDIC WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES A COHEN MEDIA GROUP RELEASE

**Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion* stories are peopled with dryly humorous bachelor-farmers of Scandinavian descent.** Their relatives might easily be found in this drama of two Icelandic brothers who raise prize-winning rams, and have lived side-by-side without talking to one another for 40 years. Each man is determined to save his flock from the fatal disease that is decimating their animals. These are men who caress the faces of their sheep and call them "my dear girl," but who aren't about to give an inch either to the authorities or to one another. The humor here is dark — flecked with driving snow, wind, and potential violence. Without a conventional romance in sight, it's a story of clashing passions: love and loyalty versus anger and obstinacy. A movie that delves deeply into the mystery of the human animal. Winner of the Un Certain Regard prize at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival.

12:30, 2:30, 4:45, 7:00, 9:10



FEBRUARY 17 – MARCH 1 2 WEEKS



## EMBRACE OF THE SERPENT

DIRECTED BY CIRO GUERRA

COLOMBIA / VENEZUELA / ARGENTINA 2015 125 MINS. IN SPANISH AND AMAZONIAN TRIBAL LANGUAGES WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES OSCILLOSCOPE LABORATORIES

**Set in the Colombian Amazon, EMBRACE OF THE SERPENT has been called visually "mesmerizing" and "stunning,"** as it tells the story of two Western explorers who search for rare botanical species in this most remote and lush of South American jungles. Based on the diaries of two white men who travelled in the region, one in 1909, and the other 30 years later — the film, nonetheless, has as its protagonist a native shaman who, first as a young man and then as a much older one, acts as their guide. Karamakate is no naïf. He's tough-minded and astute about the ravages brought by the white man's colonialism, his missionaries and rapacious rubber industry. Under the spell of their guide, the explorers unwittingly become entranced by a sense of time that is more circular than linear and experience spectacular hallucinogenic dreams and desires. In the words of one critic: "It's a hell of a trip." Winner of the top prize at the 2015 Cannes Directors' Fortnight.

1:00, 3:45, 6:40, 9:20 MON, FEB 22: No 6:40 show

MARCH 2 – 15 2 WEEKS

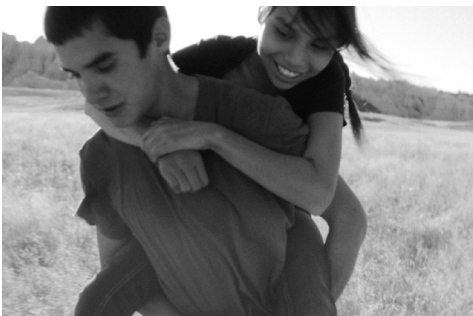
## SONGS MY BROTHERS TAUGHT ME

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY CHLOÉ ZHAO

USA 2015 94 MINS. HIGHWAYMAN FILMS

**The setting is the often starkly beautiful Badlands of South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation;** most of the key players are young Lakota Native Americans who attend Little Wound High School. Johnny and his preteen sister, Jashaun, spend time on horseback when they're not selling illegal liquor or tattoo-designed apparel. Director Chloé Zhao captures the subtleties of a marginalized existence in which the historic culture of a people can't compete on a level playing field with the modern problems of poverty, alcoholism, and violence. Amazingly, she embroiders her tale with moments of breathtaking natural beauty that offset the despair her characters struggle against. SONGS is an auspicious debut feature from a director whose superb eye is informed by the sophisticated and nuanced compassion she brings to her story.

12:30, 2:30, 4:45, 7:00, 9:15



MARCH 16 – 29 2 WEEKS



## FIREWORKS WEDNESDAY

DIRECTED BY ASGHAR FARHADI

IRAN 2006 104 MINS. IN FARSI WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

**From Asghar Farhadi, the Oscar-winning Iranian director of A SEPARATION and ABOUT ELLY:** "a beautifully paced drama about marital infidelity" (Deborah Young, *Variety*). Fireworks Wednesday (aka Red Wednesday, this year March 16) is a joyous holiday celebrating the Persian New Year with bonfires, firecrackers, and dancing in the streets. Farhadi counterpoints the festivities with a simmering domestic intrigue observed by Rouhi, a young maid (Taraneh Alidoosti, Elly of ABOUT ELLY), who cleans for a married couple. When the wife accuses her husband of having an affair with a divorced neighbor, Rouhi, once buoyant about her own upcoming wedding, starts having second thoughts. Employing intricate plotting and shifting perspectives as he did in A SEPARATION, Farhadi creates "a thoroughly engrossing and densely textured drama, showing (his) cool skill in dissecting the Iranian middle classes and the unhappiness of marriage." — Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian* (UK)

12:30, 2:45, 5:10, 7:30, 9:45 SUN, MAR 20 ONLY: 1:30, 3:45, 6:10, 8:50

MARCH 30 – APRIL 5 1 WEEK ONLY

## I DON'T BELONG ANYWHERE: THE CINEMA OF CHANTAL AKERMAN

DIRECTED BY MARIANNE LAMBERT

BELGIUM 2015 67 MINS. IN FRENCH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES ICARUS FILMS

**Chantal Akerman, one of the leading filmmakers of her generation,** took her own life last fall. Vincent Canby, in a *New York Times* review of JEANNE DIELMAN, 23 QUAI DU COMMERCE, 1080 BRUXELLES, wrote: "It's not difficult to understand the extraordinary underground reputation of this lengthy, very beautiful Belgian film starring Delphine Seyrig, a screen presence comparable, perhaps, only to Garbo... The terrible, obsessive monotony of the life it observes is ultimately as melodramatic as, say, Roman Polanski's REPULSION." Akerman went on to make more than 40 movies that both intrigued and confounded critics and audiences. Marianne Lambert, a longtime colleague, portrays the artist as a nomad who sought an emotional home that eluded her. With sequences shot just after her mother's death in 2014, Akerman says candidly: "I realized my mother was at the heart of my work. And now that my mother is no longer there, will I have something to say?"

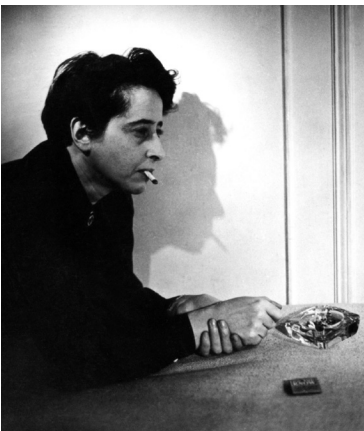
1:00, 2:40, 4:20, 6:10, 7:50, 9:30

Presented with generous support from the Ostrovsky Family Fund.

ALL TICKETS FREE OF CHARGE



APRIL 6 – 19 2 WEEKS



## VITA ACTIVA: THE SPIRIT OF HANNAH ARENDT

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ADA USHPIZ

PRODUCED BY ADA USHPIZ AND INA FICHMAN

ISRAEL / CANADA 2015 125 MINS. IN ENGLISH, HEBREW, GERMAN, AND FRENCH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES ZEITGEIST FILMS

**Forty years after her death, Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), one of the 20th century's most brilliant and influential philosophers,** remains a figure of fierce controversy. A German Jew who fled Europe for New York in 1941, she was the author of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), *The Human Condition* (1958), *Men in Dark Times* (1968) and other studies of history, violence, anti-Semitism, revolution, and power. But none were more provocative than *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963) in which she coined the phrase, "the banality of evil," to describe how a man as seemingly insignificant as Eichmann could be responsible for mass murder. Arendt was pilloried for her criticism of some Jewish leaders (especially Chaim Rumkowski) and criticized for a love affair with her professor, Martin Heidegger, a Nazi supporter. In this no-holds-barred documentary, Ada Ushpiz lets Arendt's critics have their say, but she also features the woman herself, most dramatically, in a 1964 interview for German television in which she shares fascinating insights into Eichmann: "His inability to speak was connected to his inability to think." Rarely has an intellectual, even one as public in her pronouncements as Arendt, incited so much anger, praise, devotion, and scorn.

1:00, 3:45, 6:30, 9:15

Presented with generous support from the Joan S. Constantiner Fund for Jewish and Holocaust Film.

APRIL 20 – 26 1 WEEK ONLY

## STREIT'S: MATZO AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

DIRECTED BY MICHAEL LEVINE

USA 2016 80 MINS. MENEMSHA FILMS

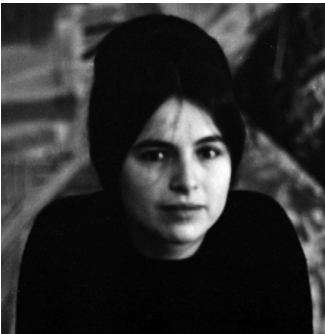
**Around 1915, Aron Streit, an Austrian immigrant, opened a matzo factory on the Lower East Side.** Located in a lumpy conglomeration of four 19th-century tenement buildings on Rivington Street, Streit's Matzo is still the gold standard for the distinctive cracker found in almost every Jewish household. "The recipe? It's found in the Bible," quips one of the great-grandsons, part of the family that continues to run the factory today. The quality of New York City's water is given some credit, but so too is the "time warp" machinery, the Rube Goldbergian intricacy of which the film lovingly admires. Matzo moves along a conveyer belt of creaky baskets as it cools and travels to another level of the building; meanwhile two rabbis ensure that kosher standards are upheld. Last fall, after years of deliberation (and failing machinery), the family moved their factory from the now-gentrified LES to Rockland County. "Like snowflakes, no two matzos are the same," they assure us. Celebrate Passover with this movie.

12:30, 2:20, 4:15, 6:10, 8:00, 9:55

Presented with generous support from the Joan S. Constantiner Fund for Jewish and Holocaust Film.



APRIL 27 – MAY 10 2 WEEKS



## EVA HESSE

DIRECTED BY MARCIE BEGLEITER

PRODUCED BY KAREN S. SHAPIRO AND MICHAEL P. AUST

USA / GERMANY 2016 108 MINS. IN ENGLISH

**Eva Hesse (1936-1970) is one of America's foremost postwar artists.** Her pioneering sculptures, using latex, fiberglass, and plastics, helped establish the post-minimalist movement. Dying of a brain tumor at age 34, she had a mere decade-long career that, despite its brevity, is dense with complex, intriguing works that defy easy categorization. EVA HESSE, the first feature-length appreciation of her life and work, makes superb use of the artist's voluminous journals, her correspondence with close friend and mentor Sol LeWitt, and contemporary as well as archival interviews with fellow artists (among them, Richard Serra, Robert Mangold, Dan Graham) who recall her passionate, ambitious, tenacious personality. Art critic Arthur Danto has written that her work is: "full of life, of eros, even of comedy..." Each piece vibrates with originality and mischief." The documentary captures these qualities, but also the psychic struggles of an artist who, in the downtown New York art scene of the 1960s, was one of the few women to make work that was taken seriously in a field dominated by male pop artists and minimalists.

12:30, 2:45, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50

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For additional information, please contact Denyse Reed  
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2016

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