

January 22, 2004

Welcome to the Eighth International Women's Film Festival! The Festival runs every Thursday night, from February 5 through March 11 at the Market Arcade Film & Arts Centre. The Gender Institute (Institute for Research & Education on Women & Gender) is pleased to offer another outstanding series of quality films made by women that portray the experience of women and the views of women directors from around the world. This year, films depict women's lives and perspectives in Canada, India, Iran, Japan, France, and the United States. The anthology film SEPTEMBER 11 includes views from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burkino Faso, Egypt, Israel, Mexico and the United Kingdom.

We hope you will enjoy and learn from these films, and support women in film through your attendance throughout the six weeks of the International Women's Film Festival.

Barbara J. Bono, Ph.D.
Director, Gender Institute
Associate Professor, Dept. of English
University at Buffalo

PROGRAM NOTES

8th International Women's Film Festival
Thursdays, February 5 – March 11, 2004
All shows 7 pm
Market Arcade Film & Arts Centre
639 Main St. Buffalo NY 14203 Across from Shea's
**Tickets: \$7.50 general/\$5.50 students with ID/
\$5 seniors & HALLWALLS members**
For information call 716.829.3451

Screening Date: **February 5**
Title: **THE FOURTH DIMENSION**
Year: 2001
Director: **Trinh T. Minh-ha**
Country: U.S.A.
Length: 87 min.
Format: DVCAM
Feature, Color

INTRODUCTION by the director, Professor Trinh
With Diane Christian, English, UB

Website: www.wmm.com

Synopsis:

Acclaimed filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-ha (director of *A Tale of Love* screened as part of Buffalo's 2nd International Women's Film Festival in 1997; she also appeared in Buffalo in 1989 for a screening of her film, *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*) ventures into the digital realm with her stunning new feature *The Fourth Dimension*, an incisive and insightful examination of Japan through its art, culture, and social rituals. As is the case with Trinh's previous films, her new video is a multilayered work addressing issues around its central theme: the experience of time, the impossibility of truly "seeing," and the impact of video on image-making.

"Trinh T. Minh-ha's newest essayistic work and her first videotape, cuts an intricate key for unlocking this elusive culture. Her tack finds great visual pleasure in the everyday, composing and decomposing the social landscape, while constructing a poetic grid of temporalities, symbolic meanings, and ritual. In *The Fourth Dimension*, Trinh's lyrical narration guides us through 'Japan's likeness,' the perfected framing of the sacramental familiar." -- Steve Seid, Pacific Film Archives

"*The Fourth Dimension*" is an elegant meditation on time, travel, and ceremony in the form of a journey. In her first foray into digital video, Minh-ha deconstructs the role of ritual in mediating between the past and the present. She explains, "Shown in their widespread functions and manifestations, including more evident loci such as festivals, religious rite and theatrical performance, 'rituals' involve not only the regularity in the structure of everyday life, but also the dynamic agents in the world of meaning." With its lush imagery, Minh-ha's Japan is viewed through mobile frames, with doors and windows sliding shut, revealing new vistas as it blocks out the old light.

Director Information:

Born in Vietnam, Trinh T. Minh-ha is a filmmaker, writer and composer. *The Fourth Dimension* is the sixth feature from Trinh. Her impressive body of film work includes *A Tale of Love*, *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*, and *Reassemblage* – documentaries that examine the meaning of identity and displacement in China, Vietnam and West Africa. The recipient of several distinguished grants and awards, including the American Film Institute's National Independent Filmmaker Maya Deren Award, the Sundance Film Festival's Best Cinematography Award, and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Film Institute, and the California Arts Council. Trinh's films and videos have shown to wide acclaim in North America, Asia and Europe. *The Fourth Dimension* is her first digital feature.

Her other works include:

"*A Tale of Love*" (1995)
"*Shoot for the Contents*" (1991)

"Surname Viet Given Name Nam" (1989)
"Naked Spaces: Living is Round" (1985)
"Reassemblage" (1982)
"Cinema Interval" (1999)
"Drawn from African Dwellings" (in coll. With Jean-Paul Bourdier 1996)
"Framer Framed" (1992)
"When the Moon Waxes Red" (1989)
"En minuscules" (1987)
"African Spaces: Designs for Living in Upper Volta" (in coll. With J. P. Bourdier, 1985) "Un Art sans oeuvre" (1981)
"Nothing But Ways" (in coll. With Lynne Kirby, 1999).
http://www.wmm.com/catalog_makers/fm5.htm

Screening Date: **February 12**
Title: **CHAOS <<<Free Screening>>>**
Year: 2003
Director: **Coline Serreau**
Country: France
Length: 109 min.
Format: 35 mm
Feature, Color

Introduction by **Jeannette Ludwig**, Romance Languages & Literatures, UB

Website: <http://www.newyorkerfilms.com>

Synopsis:

Hélène and Paul are a bourgeois French couple who are constantly racing through the day to keep up with all of their obligations, barely taking the time to look at each other. As they are rushing off to an engagement, Paul and Hélène witness Malika, a young prostitute, being violently attacked by a group of men just outside of their car. As Malika is beaten and left for dead, Paul locks the doors and speeds off. Malika ends up hospitalized and in a coma. Hélène visits her in the hospital, assists her throughout her recovery, and becomes a partner with Malika in seeking revenge on those responsible for the human trafficking that results in forced prostitution and other violence against women. Serreau works her trademark combination of drama, comedy, and social critique most effectively in "Chaos."

<http://www.ritzfilmbill.com/editorial/synopses/chaos.shtml>

"Think RUN LOLA RUN meets THELMA & LOUISE."
Bilge Eberi, New York Magazine

Director Information:

French director Coline Serreau is noted for her often comical views of the war between the sexes. She has worked in theater, television, and feature films. As a filmmaker, Serreau first gained recognition for her comedy Three Men and a Cradle (1985) for which she won two Césars -- the film was remade in America as 3 Men and a Baby two years later.

<http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hc&cf=gen&id=1800011281>

Her other works include:

Mama, There's a Man in Your Bed (1990)

Three Men and a Cradle (1985)

3 Men and a Baby (1987)

Pourquoi Pas! (1979)

Reviews:

<http://www.offoffoff.com/film/2003/chaos.php>

note: also CS Monitor review 01-31-03 in FilmFest04.doc

Interview with Serreau on CHAOS:

http://www.indiewire.com/people/people_030130serreau.html

View her Picture:

http://www.dga.org/news/v27_2/images/dganewsjuly02/news_cityoflights3_full.html

Screening Date: **February 19**
Title: **MARION BRIDGE**
Year: 2002
Director: **Wiebke von Carolsfeld**
Country: Canada
Length: 90 min.
Format: 35mm
Feature, Color

Introduction by **Kass Banning**, Cinema Studies, University of Toronto

Website: www.filmmovement.com

Synopsis:

Agnes (Molly Parker), in the midst of a struggle to overcome her own self destructive behavior, returns to Sydney, Nova Scotia from Toronto because of the failing health of her mother Rose (Marguerite McNeil). She is met by her older sister Theresa (Rebecca Jenkins), a devout Catholic who has recently been dumped by her husband for a younger woman, and Louise (Stacy Smith), the middle child who has retreated from the outside world. Her arrival sets in motion a chain of events that allows the family to reconnect with the world and one another. Also described as "a Canadian King Lear".

Director Information:

Wiebke von Carolsfeld was born, raised and educated (University of Cologne) in Germany. Since coming to Canada, she has worked as picture editor for such filmmakers as Tim Southam (*The Bay of Love and Sorrows*), Jeremy Podeswa (*The Five Senses, After the Harvest*), Renny Bartlett (*Eisenstein*- Genie Nomination for Best Editing), Daniel MacIvor (*Permission, Until I Hear From You*) and many others. She has made two award-winning short films as a director, *From Morning On I Waited Yesterday* and *spiral bound*, which have screened at festivals all across Canada, the United States as well as in Europe. Last year, she was the Director Observer on Atom Egoyan's feature "Ararat". *Marion Bridge* is her first feature.

She has won **Best Canadian First Feature award** at Toronto International Film Festival and **Outstanding Writer Award** at the following festivals: Rotterdam International Film Festival 2003 Official Competition, Santa Barbara International Film Festival 2003 Official Competition, Vancouver Film Festival 2002 Official Selection, Calgary Film Festival 2002 Official Selection, and Atlantic Film Festival. She is also editor of *The five Senses* (2000).

Screening Date: **February 26**
Title: **SEPTEMBER 11 / 11'09"01**
Year: 2002
Director: **11 international directors**
Country: France, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burkino Faso, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Japan, Mexico, United Kingdom, United States of America
Length: 134 min.
Format: 35 mm
Feature, Color

Introduction by **Bernadette Wegenstein**, Media Study, UB

Website: www.empirepicturesusa.com

Synopsis:

SEPTEMBER 11 shows us an example of cinematic and artistic creation coming out of the ashes of that day in 2001 in New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. An unorthodox look at the repercussions of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 is presented in this collection of short films by eleven directors from eleven countries about how people from all walks of life were changed that day. Two of the films are directed by women. Included are stories from a World Trade Center tour guide going through relationship problems just before the attacks and a lonely old man who lives minutes from the Twin Towers. A group of schoolchildren from Afghanistan living in an Iranian refugee camp are asked to contemplate the deaths of people in the United States on 9-11. A boy in Burkina Faso thinks Osama Bin Laden is hiding in his village. Also included is a segment

on another deadly September 11 decades ago, and one with the viewpoint of a suicide bomber. www.netflix.com

Director Information:

Youssef Chahine (segment "Egypt")
<http://www.youssefchahine.tk/>

Amos Gitai (segment "Israel") (as Amos Gitai)
<http://www.amosgitai.com/bio.php>

Alejandro González Iñárritu (segment "Mexico")
<http://www.tribute.ca/DIRECTORS/BIOS/7121.htm>

Shohei Imamura (segment "Japan")
http://www.issay.com/shohei-imamura/english/e_index.html

Claude Lelouch (segment "France")
http://skynet.dvdpost.be/directors.php?directors_id=326

Ken Loach (segment "United Kingdom")
<http://www.1worldfilms.com/kenloach.htm>

Samira Makhmalbaf (segment "God, Construction and Destruction")
<http://www.makhmalbaf.com/persons.asp?p=sa>

Mira Nair (segment "India")
<http://www.mirabaifilms.com/bio.html>

Idrissa Ouedraogo (segment "Burkina Faso")
<http://people.africadatabase.org/people/data/person3305.html>

Excerpt from http://spot.pcc.edu/~mdembrow/kini_and_adams.htm

"Born in Burkina Faso (the former Upper Volta), Idrissa Ouedraogo (pronounced "Wa-dra-o-go") first studied film at the African Institute of Cinematographic Studies in Ouagadougou ... a growing number of engaging, thoughtful, and well-crafted films have come out of Burkina Faso in the last decade. Many of them have been by Idrissa Ouedraogo... -Notes by Michael Dembrow for 9th Annual Cascade Festival of African Films

Sean Penn (segment "USA")
<http://www.movieclub.com/spotlight/penn/penn.html>

Also <http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hc&id=1800019044&cf=gen&intl=us>
Click on BIOGRAPHY

Danis Tanovic (segment "Bosnia-Herzegovina")
<http://www.sagafilm.com/danis.html>

Screening Date: **March 4**
Title: **THE MAY LADY**
Year: 1998
Director: **Rakhshan Bani-Etemad**
Country: Iran
Length: 88 min
Format: DVD
Feature, Color

Introduction by **Behjat Henderson**, Gender Institute, UB
Website:

<http://www.irifilms.com/the%20may%20lady/may%20lady.htm>

Synopsis:

Protagonist of this film is Forough, a 42-year-old female Iranian documentary-maker. She is successful in her work, but faces problems in her private life. She is divorced and thinking about starting a new relationship. But her teenage son Mani regards himself as the man about the house. This results in a covert war of nerves between mother and son. In the meantime Forough's latest commission is to make a documentary on "the ideal mother". She surrounds herself with videotapes on which women talk about the social problems they experience, such as the painful consequences of the war with Iraq. The differences with Forough's feelings become painfully apparent.

<http://www.irifilms.com/the%20may%20lady/may%20lady.htm>

Director Information:

Rakhshan Bani-Etemad
(b. Tehran, Iran, 1954)



Although Rakhshan Bani-Etemad is by no means the only one, she is certainly the leading female contemporary filmmaker in Iran. Her whole output is marked by a strong social and political consciousness and commitment. Born in Teheran in 1954, Bani-Etemad studied film at the University of Dramatic Arts in the Iranian capital. In 1973 she joined the staff of the national TV as a script girl, then was promoted to assistant director, then producer and manager. In 1977 she began her directing career as a documentary-filmmaker for television. Her documentary approach or touch, remained a constant in her feature film work. *"I cannot separate documentary from fiction cinema. I have a constant urge to make documentaries.(...) which does not mean that I would insert documentary shots in a feature film. It rather specifies my outlook and point of view."*

Her first full-length feature film, **Kharej az Mahdudeh** (Off the Limits, 1987), was a satire on bureaucracy. In 1991 she was the first woman to win the Best Director award at Iran's

most prestigious Fajr Film Festival with **Nargess**. (**Nargess** was first shown in Ljubljana as part of Kinoteka's introduction to Iranian Cinema: *Okus Irana*). Bani-Etemad's international reputation and recognition continued to grow, winning numerous awards (including the Bronze Leopard at the Locarno film festival for **Rusariye Abi** (The Blue-Veiled, 1995), and an award from the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development in the Netherlands).

Her first three feature films are comedies with a sharp eye for social satire. The central characters are subjected to events to which they can only react. Men's attempts to improve their lot are subverted. The women in these films tend to be rather background figures. But her later, more personal films focus on strong women living under hard and discriminatory social conditions. Rakhshan Bani-Etemad often puts her finger on taboo subjects such as poverty, crime and forbidden love. Asked about her main topics and the role of women in her films Bani-Etemad said, *"I have never decided in advance if my film's subject should deal with men or women. In my film career, I draw a line between films I made before and after **Nargess**. That is to say, instead of dealing with a woman or a man, my first three films pictured a social situation within which I developed my characters. But from **Nargess** onward, I use the characters to reflect a social situation."*
www.cityofwomen-a.si/2001/bani.html

A filmmaker whose background in cinema - like that of compatriot Abbas Kiarostami - was from documentary work, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad retains the acuity and relevance of nonfiction filmmaking to create a compelling fictional story that, nevertheless, captures the underlying reality of the ingrained socio-economic disparity endemic in the post-revolution, patriarchal society of contemporary Iran.
www.filmref.com/directors/dirpages/BaniEtemad.html

Screening Date: **March 11**
Title: **AMY'S ORGASM**
Year: 2002
Director: **Julie Davis**
Country: U.S.A
Length: 85 min.
Format: 35 mm
Feature, Color

Website: www.filmcritic.com

Synopsis:

Writer-director Julie Davis also plays the lead in this witty, liberating film. She stars as Amy, a successful author of self-help books, whose main thesis is that women don't need men to feel fulfilled. Ironically, Amy isn't quite sure she believes her own words, and she is put to the test when she appears on the show of a macho radio shock jock (Nick Chinlund). Surprisingly, the unlikely pair falls for each other, but must then overcome their own insecurities before they can be truly happy. The New York Times christened Davis "the female Woody Allen."

<http://www.amctv.com/show/detail/0%2C%2C61691-1-EST%2C00.html>

Director Information:

Julie Davis is a writer, director and an actress. She is the film's writer, director and star. She was recently awarded the *Breakthrough Artist Award* at Miami's first *Sunlight Awards Gala* for her work on the film. The achievement recognized her as "an artist reaching great heights." While the 34-year-old moviemaker's ascension up Hollywood's ladder appears to be a successful one, it has nonetheless been an arduous climb. After graduating from Dartmouth, a starry-eyed Davis packed her bags and headed west to shake up Hollywood with her poignant ideas. But what she found when she arrived was cynicism and a bounty of hardships. Today, with two films under her belt and a third in the works, Davis is setting herself apart from L.A.'s numerous wannabe moviemakers and proving herself to those who doubted her artistic ways in the beginning.

<http://southbeach-usa.com/interview/interview1/davis/julie-davis.htm>

Around the world, women's lives, realities, and viewpoints are conveyed through the medium of film. Come see what women are up to!