

**UWM French and
The Union Theatre present
The 25th Annual Festival of Films in French**

February 11-20, 2022

Join us in person for the 25th Annual Festival of Films in French which resolutely showcases films about women and by women. Celebrating world-cinema in French, this edition of nine films highlights women's artistry, their societal and familial roles, their activism and engagement with others, their sense of social and environmental justice, and recognizes the directors who bring these generations of women and actresses to the silver screen. The first weekend spotlights the rich diversity of Quebec's fecund cinema, featuring *Je m'appelle Humain*, the moving life journey of Innu poet, Josephine Bacon captured in poetry by documentarist Kim O'Bomsawin along the trail of the Master of the Caribou as she bears witness and seeks to keep alive her language, culture, and traditions. *Nin e tepueian - Mon cri* focuses on the next generation of Innu activists, in the person of Natasha Kanapé Fontaine whose own passionate voice interrogates the longstanding racist disregard of indigenous peoples. Strong female characters take the lead in *La langue est donc une histoire d'amour* as immigrants to Montreal share heartrending stories with their French language teacher, and in *Antigone*, whose eponymous young Algerian immigrant character is caught up in a modern tragedy that pits love of family against the cold rule of law in a struggle that is largely played out on social media. Following on from the women's difficult survival stories in the context of climate change tenderly recorded in *Marcher sur l'eau*, Alice Diop's juxtaposition of History and individualized stories conjugates their pluralities together with the spaces they occupy along the RER B in her finely tuned contemporary documentary *Nous*. Mati Diop is both daughter to Lionel the sensitive RER conductor caught in the tracks that their quotidian has ritualized in Claire Denis' *35 rhums* and the first Black woman director selected for Cannes' main competition for her 2019 *Atlantique*, a haunted feature-length fiction about the young women left behind in Dakar as their male partners and family members depart clandestinely in precarious crafts for other shores. Ending the Festival is Germaine Acogny, the doyenne of Contemporary African Dance who is seen (after her cameo appearance as Tanam in *Yao*), in *Iya Tundé, la mère est revenue*, Laure Malécot's documentary about the dancer-choreographer's own life practice and titled eponymously after her 2015 historical and familial solo. Come in from the cold and behold the cinematography of this year's selection once again on the big screen!

THANKS/CREDITS:

The UWM French Program is grateful for the generosity and continued support of the Québec Government Office in Chicago. For this edition of the festival, we wish to give special thanks to our co-sponsor the Electa Quinney Institute for American Indian Education.

The film *La langue est donc une histoire d'amour* is in memory of Nicole Darmon Chandler, a resident of Milwaukee for over 40 years, and a former president of the Alliance française. Nicole participated in French language activities at UWM for decades and was a fan of films.

We thank our many past and present UWM co-sponsors: Student Involvement, the Department of Women's & Gender Studies, the Sam & Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies, the Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies, the Department of Film, Video, Animation, and New Genres, the Department of History, the Middle Eastern North African Studies Certificate Program, the Institute of World Affairs, Global and International Studies, the Department of African and African Diasporic Studies, the MA in Language, Literature and Translation (MALLT), the Department of French, Italian, and Comparative Literature, the Department of Dance, the Film Studies Program, and the College of Letters & Science.

We greatly appreciate the community sponsorship of the Alliance française of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee French Immersion School, and SWAAF (Southeast Wisconsin Academic Alliance in French).

We extend a special note of gratitude to our colleague Professor Emerita Gabrielle Verdier for her vision in establishing the UWM Festival of Films in French with Professor Martin Darmon Meyer (1929-2013).

Friday February 11 • 7pm Opening ceremony, film follows.
Saturday February 12 • 4:30pm

Je m'appelle Humain (*Call me Human*)

Kim O'Bomsawin, DCP, 78 min, Québec, 2020 (French, Innu)

This documentary is a moving portrait of Innu writer, poet and filmmaker Joséphine Bacon on a quest to connect past and present, elders and new generations, to keep alive a language, a culture, and its traditions. Her poems throughout the film have us sense the millennia-long history and soul of a people whose name, Innu, means "human".



Co-sponsored by the Québec Government Office in Chicago & the Electa Quinney Institute for American Indian Education

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCdoqPE0dLU&t=1s>

Saturday, February 12 • 7pm

Nin e tepueian – Mon cri (*Nin e tepueian – My Cry*)

Santiago Bertolino, DCP, 82 min, Québec, 2019 (French, English, Innu)

This documentary tracks the journey of Innu poet, actress and activist Natasha Kanapé Fontaine, at a pivotal time in her career as a committed artist. To heal the wound of racism, Natasha has re-appropriated her Innu language and become a media spokesperson. Words have helped her rediscover her roots and empowered her. She gets the conversation going, and as it develops, she questions the need for self-determination for herself as well as for other Indigenous people both here and elsewhere.



Co-sponsored by the Québec Government Office in Chicago & the Electa Quinney Institute for American Indian Education

Trailer:

https://vimeo.com/375009458?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=7844539

Sunday, February 13 • 2pm

La langue est donc une histoire d'amour (*Language is a Love Story*)

Andrés Livov, DVD, 89 min, Québec, 2019 (French)

Language lessons for adult migrants from across the world at a school in Montreal. The most important rule is respect; the most important ingredients are commitment and empathy – and a teacher like Madame Loiseau.



*Co-sponsored by the Québec Government Office in Chicago
In memory of Nicole Darmon Chandler*

Trailer:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=F4bx26xA03A&feature=emb_logo

Sunday, February 13 • 4pm

Antigone

Sophie Deraspe, DVD, 109 min, Québec, 2019 (French, Kabyle)

Best Canadian Feature Film, 2019
Toronto International Film Festival

In this modern adaptation of the classic Greek tragedy, Antigone is a brilliant teenager with a promising future. When tragedy strikes her immigrant family, she helps her brother escape from prison. Driven by love and loyalty to her family, she confronts patriarchal law, the police and the justice system.



Co-sponsored by the Québec Government Office in Chicago

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4RhiHtcArc>

Wednesday, February 16 • 7pm

Marcher sur l'eau (Above Water)

Aïssa Maïga, DCP, 89 min, France/Niger, 2021 (Peuhl, French)

US premiere
Official Selection, 2021 Cannes Festival

Co-written by French actress Aïssa Maïga and Ariane Kirtley, this film documents the dire consequences of climate change in the Sahel. Focusing on a Wodaabe Peuhl village of semi-sedentarized pastoralists in the region of Azawagh in Northern Niger, the film follows Houlaye, a 14 year old girl, who fetches water and cares for her siblings when the adults must journey forth to support their families until a drilling project reveals the aquifer that lies beneath them.



Co-sponsored by UWM Student Involvement & Fresh Water Studies

Talk-back with James Price (School of Fresh Water Sciences).

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fhjaa8dnoK4&t=1s>

Friday, February 18 • 7pm
Sunday, February 20 • 4pm

Atlantique (*Atlantics*)

Mati Diop, DCP, 105 min, France/Senegal/Belgium, 2019 (Wolof, French)

Grand Prix, 2019 Cannes Festival
Milwaukee premiere

Along the Atlantic coast, in a suburb of Dakar, Ada and Souleiman are young and in love. But they face many obstacles. Souleiman is a construction worker, exploited by his unscrupulous billionaire boss, whereas Ada has been promised by her father to another man. One morning, Ada learns that Souleiman embarked on a journey to Europe with several of his co-workers. Days later, a fire breaks out during Ada's wedding and there are claims that Souleiman has returned.



Co-sponsored by the Alliance française de Milwaukee, the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies & HOME, Lynden Sculpture Garden

Talk-backs with Ermitte Saint Jacques (Department of African and African Diaspora Studies): 2/18 & 2/20.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhcXyK8s-io&feature=emb_logo

Saturday, February 19 • 4:30pm

35 Rhums (*35 Shots of Rum*)

Claire Denis, DVD, 102 min, France, 2008 (French)

Lionel, a RER conductor, has been raising his daughter Joséphine, a university student, single-handedly ever since his wife passed away. Living by the tracks of the Gare de l'Est, they have created a family with the residents of their apartment building. In a delicate balance between ritual and loss, Claire Denis follows the father's realization that he must let his daughter fly with her own wings.



Co-sponsored by the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies

Talk-back with Romuald Fonkoua (Centre International d'Études Francophones, Sorbonne Université)

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJWm9iq7XA8&feature=emb_logo

Saturday, February 19 • 7pm

Nous (*We*)

Alice Diop, DCP, 115 min, France, 2021 (French)

Golden Bear for Best Documentary & Best Film, Encounters, 2021 Berlinale
Midwest Premiere

Winner of the Berlinale Documentary Award, *Nous* takes us on a journey along the RER B train line that runs from Charles de Gaulle airport, north of Paris to the capital's southern suburbs. Presenting historical sites such as the Basilica of Saint-Denis and a series of portraits of the residents and personalities living along the way, *Nous* captures the diversity and richness of their all too human stories.



Co-sponsored by the Alliance française de Milwaukee

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CizkuFXQXg&feature=emb_title

Sunday, February 20 • 2pm

Iya tundé, la mère est revenue (*Iya Tundé, The Mother Came Back*)

Laure Malécot, DCP, 52 min, Senegal, 2017 (French, Yoruba, Wolof)
Midwest Premiere

This portrait pays homage to the doyenne of contemporary African dance, Germaine Acogny as she turns 70. Documenting the life's work of the Franco-Senegalese dancer-choreographer, whether at home at the Ecole des Sables, in Toubab Dialaw, Senegal that she founded, leading master-classes in Africa, Asia and Europe, or in performance, this film focuses on understanding her creative process and discovering her personal development and approach to life.



Co-sponsored by the Department of Dance & HOME, Lynden Sculpture Garden

Talk-back with DeMar Walker (Artistic Director, Ko Thi Dance Company & Department of Dance)

Trailer:

https://vimeo.com/219708651?embedded=true&source=video_title&owner=55570494

All films are in French and other languages with English subtitles.
All films are **FREE** and open to the public.