

# UWM French and the Union Theatre present The 19th Annual Festival of Films in French

## February 12-21, 2016

This year's selection begins and ends with two diverse and striking representations of Paris (*L'écume des jours* and *Bande de filles*). In between, the festival takes us to far-flung places including *Timbuktu* (Abderrahmane Sissako's 2014 gracefully disquieting and humane drama) *Port-au-Prince, dimanche 4 janvier* a U.S. premiere which is set on the 200th anniversary of Haiti's independence and on the eve of Aristide's 'coup-napping', Madagascar in the award-winning *Ady Gasy* (another U.S. premiere which follows a wordsmith as he visits the country's varied and enterprising recyclers), and Montreal (in Canada's 2016 Oscar contender *Félix et Meira*). In tribute to the influential avant-garde Belgian filmmaker Chantal Akerman (1950-2015), we feature her own tribute to another great artist, German choreographer Pina Bausch (*Un jour Pina m'a demandé*). Other films by women include Céline Sciamma's coming-of-age story *Bande de filles* and Sophie Fillières' serio-comic depiction of a modern marriage, *Arrête ou je continue*. The festival also travels back in history to World War I with the 1927 silent film *Verdun* (showing on the 100th anniversary of the start of this deadliest battle of the war) and to World War II with the powerful documentary *Because I Was a Painter* and the children's adventure story *Belle et Sébastien*. For the child in all of us, we will also be screening the 2016 New Faces in French Animation shorts. Finally, don't miss *La Ronde*, Max Ophüls' classic post-war (1950) exploration of love's vicissitudes, adapted from Arthur Schnitzler's controversial 1897 fin-de-siècle play.

The UWM French Program thanks the FACE Foundation and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy for the 2015 Tournées Film Festival grant, and is grateful for the generosity of Dr. Richard Stone and the continued support of the Québec Government Office in Chicago. We thank our UWM co-sponsors: Student Involvement, Year of the Humanities, Department of Africology, Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies, African American Film Series, Community Media Project, Department of Film, Video, Animation, and New Genres, Institute of World Affairs, Sam & Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies, Milwaukee LGBT Film/Video Festival, Department of Dance, MA in Language, Literature, and Translation Program (MALLT), and the Department of French, Italian, & Comparative Literature. We greatly appreciate the community sponsorship of the Alliance Française of Milwaukee 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 19 years ago.

### ***L'écume des jours (Mood Indigo)***

Friday February 12, 7PM

Saturday February 13, 9PM

Michel Gondry, Blu-ray, 112 min, France/Belgium, 2014 (French)

Based on the novel by Boris Vian, this film depicts the romantic challenges faced by Colin (Romain Duris) and Chloé (Audrey Tautou). Director Michael Gondry (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*) manages to recreate the surrealist props and scenery of Vian's novel while remaining true to the story. Visual tour de force, the film combines digital special effects, stop-motion animation, and stunt work to create a fantasy-like atmosphere against the backdrop of a post-war Paris revitalized by jazz music and intellectuals (like 'Jean-Sol Partre').

Presented as part of Tournées Film Festival



### ***New Faces in French Animation***

Sunday February 14, 5PM

Sunday February 20, 3PM

A selection of the best French animated shorts curated by Marcel Jean, the artistic director of the acclaimed Annecy International Animated Film Festival.

Cosponsored by the Cultural services of the Embassies of France in the US and Canada



### ***La Ronde***

Thursday February 18, 7PM

Max Ophüls, DVD, 95 min, France, 1950 (French)

In this adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's risqué 1897 play, a series of lovers form a chain of relationships, where one partner is handed off to another, just like in ballroom round dance. The cast includes some of the great names of French cinema: Simone Signoret, Danielle Darrieux, Simone Simon, Gerard Philipe, Serge Reggiani, and Jean-Louis Barrault. Film critic Terrance Rafferty calls Ophüls "a connoisseur of the ephemeral, an artist



who seemed to know in his bones that everything is impermanent, that life is fragile, faithless, as fickle as the busy lovers in *La Ronde*.”

Co-sponsored by the UWM Union Cinema

### ***Arrête ou je continue (If You Don't, I Will)***

Friday February 12, 9:30PM

Saturday February 13, 5PM

Sophie Fillières, Blu-ray, 102, France, 2014 (France)

Having played opposite of each other half a dozen times, seasoned actors Emmanuelle Devos and Mathieu Amalric bring their special chemistry and characteristic comic timing to the roles of Pomme and Pierre, a bickering couple on the brink of breaking up after many years together. Can Pomme's defiant return to nature bring her back in tune with herself and perhaps even salvage their relationship?

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### ***Port-au-Prince, dimanche 4 février***

Sunday February 14, 7PM

Monday February 15, 7PM

François Matheuret, DVD, 80 min, Haiti/France, 2014  
(French/Kreyol)

This adaptation of Haitian novelist Lyonel Truillots 2004 Bicentenaire was filmed in post-earthquake Port-au-Prince and Guadeloupe. After months of student and mass protests against the “Prophet” President Aristide, two brothers sharing a shack above the city find themselves in diametrically opposed political camps. Lucien, a student in philosophy, believes that protest demonstrations can bring about democracy, and Little Joe, a recruit of the Chimera militia, follows their gang tactics to disrupt the students’ march to the presidential palace.

Cosponsored by UWM Sociocultural Programming, the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and the UWM Department of Africology



### ***Bande de Filles (Girlhood)***

Friday February 19, 9PM

Sunday February 21, 7PM

Céline Sciamma, DVD, 112 min, France, 2014 (French)

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In this intimate coming of age story set in the Parisian suburbs, Marieme is looking to escape her abusive family situation. She changes her name, her dress code, and quits school. Hanging out with three new girlfriends, and living under the protection of an older man, she realizes that her newfound freedom comes with a price Opening Film, Directors' Fortnight, Cannes 2014.

Co-sponsored by the UWM Department of Film, Video, Animation and New Genres, and the UWM Department of Africology



### ***Un jour Pina M'a demandé (One Day Pina Asked)***

Saturday February 13, 7PM

Sunday February 14, 9PM

Chantal Akerman, DVD, 57 min, Belgium, 1983 (French)

In homage to Pina Bausch (2009) and Chantal Akerman (2015) Bringing two remarkable women artists of the 20th century together, *One Day Pina Asked* is a journey through choreographer Pina Bausch's world and her quest for love. "With her audacious compositions, decisive cuts, and tightrope-tremulous sense of time," Akerman's film "is one of a piece with Bausch's dances. It is a work of modestly daring wonder, of exploration and inspiration" (The New Yorker).

Co-sponsored by the UWM Department of Dance, LGBT Film/Video Festival, the Sam and Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies

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### ***Verdun***

Tuesday February 16, 7PM

Léon Poirier, DVD, 151 min, France, 1927 (Silent)

This screening of Poirier's epic silent film coincides almost exactly with the hundredth anniversary of the start of this horrendous World War I battle. Filming began on the tenth anniversary of Verdun, using many war veterans as actors (including Marshall Pétain who plays himself!) and combining documentary footage with meticulously staged reenactments. Its pacifist message is delivered through a realistic chronicling of the



terrible human toll taken by ten long months of fighting. With musical accompaniment by Renato Umali.

Co-sponsored by the Alliance française de Milwaukee

### ***Timbuktu***

Friday February 19, 7PM

Saturday February 20, 5PM

Abderrahmane Sissako, DVD, 97 min, Mali/Mauritania, 2014  
(French, Arabic, Tamasheq, Bambara)

Poetical and political, *Timbuktu* weaves together a series of anecdotes portraying life in Mali under jihadi rule. Opposing fanaticism with humanism, characters living in the dunes tend to their cattle and urban dwellers drink tea, play music, attend the mosque, and play football, in spite of the heavily armed militia-men's arbitrary bans and brutal acts of punishment and destruction. Best Foreign Language Film nomination, Oscars 2014; Cannes 2014 Prize of the Ecumenical Jury and the François Chalais prize.

Co-sponsored by the Community Media Project, the UWM Department of Film, Video, Animation and New Genres, the Institute of World Affairs

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### ***Belle et Sébastien***

Feb 14 3pm Feb 21 1pm

Nicolas Vanier, Blu-ray, 104 min, France, 2013 (French)

It's 1943 and Germans are hunting down Resistance fighters in the French Alps where Sébastien, an orphan, lives with his grandfather, a shepherd, and his aunt, a baker. When sheep are found slaughtered, his grandfather and the local villagers believe that a stray dog is responsible. Sébastien finds the dog, names it Belle, and they become inseparable. Will Sébastien save Belle and foil the Nazis' efforts? (Followed by a talkback).

Cosponsored by the UWM Master of Arts in Language, Literature, and Translation the Alliance française de Milwaukee

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### ***Ady Gasy (The Malagasy Way)***

Saturday February 13, 7PM

Lova Nantenaina, Blu-ray, 84 min, Madagascar, 2014 (Malagasy, French)

This vibrant documentary offers a bittersweet satirical critique of global over-production and consumption. In Madagascar, where people are defying the country's economic and environmental crisis with great ingenuity, a Malagasy narrator sets out to tell their stories. Just as they waste nothing, transforming tires into shoes or cans into lamps, toys, and instruments, he finds himself rewording the tools of his oral traditions as he undertakes his journey.

Shown in conjunction with the Union Cinema's Share the Earth Environmental Film Series.



### ***Parce que j'étais peintre (Because I Was a Painter)***

Saturday February 20, 7PM

Sunday February 21, 3PM

Christophe Cognet, Blu-ray, 104 min, France/Germany, 2014 (French, German, English, Hebrew)

This documentary detailing clandestine artwork created by prisoners of concentration camps during World War II offers “a meditation on suffering and beauty and how art can bridge the gap between the two” (*The Hollywood Reporter*). Cognet explores the many paradoxes raised by these works as he travels through France, Germany, Israel, Poland, Czech Republic, Belgium, and Switzerland to gather the testimony of surviving artists and curators.

Cosponsored by the Sam and Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies

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### ***Félix et Meira***

Saturday February 20, 9PM

Sunday February 21, 5PM

Maxime Gireoux, Blu-ray, 105 min, Quebec, 2014 (French, Yiddish, English, Spanish, Hebrew, Italian)

Meira, a young Hasidic housewife and mother, and Félix, a hipster mourning the death of his father, unexpectedly meet at a local bakery in Montreal's Mile End multiethnic district. What



starts as an innocent friendship becomes more serious as the two strangers find comfort in one another.

Co-sponsored by the Center for Jewish Studies and the Alliance française de Milwaukee

All films are in French and other languages w/English subtitles.

All films are **FREE** and open to the public!