



13TH ANNUAL ROBERT

# CLASSIC FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL

Presented by **TV5MONDE**

**Aug. 13-15 at Washington University**

**Aug. 20-22 and 27-29 at Webster University**

Sponsored by the Jane M. & Bruce P. Robert Charitable Foundation

Produced by

**CINEMA ST. LOUIS**

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## **Centre Francophone at Webster University**

An organization dedicated to promoting Francophone culture and helping French educators.

*Contact info: Salim Ayyoub, Ph.D., Jane and Bruce Robert Chair in French and Francophone Studies, Webster University, 314-246-8619, francophone@webster.edu, facebook.com/centrefrancophoneinstlouis, webster.edu/arts-and-sciences/affiliates-events/centre-francophone*



## **Alliance Française de St. Louis**

A member-supported nonprofit center engaging the St. Louis community in French language and culture.

*Contact info: 314-432-0734, bonjour@alliancestl.org, alliancestl.org*



## **American Association of Teachers of French**

The only professional association devoted exclusively to the needs of French teachers at all levels, with the mission of advancing the study of the French language and French-speaking literatures and cultures both in schools and in the general public.

*Contact info: Audra Merfeld-Langston, president, Greater St. Louis Chapter, audram@mst.edu, www.frenchteachers.org*



## **Les Amis ("The Friends")**

French Creole heritage preservationist group for the Mid-Mississippi River Valley. Promotes the Creole Corridor on both sides of the Mississippi River from Cahokia-Chester, IL, and Ste. Genevieve-St. Louis, MO. Parts of the Corridor are in the process of nomination for the designation of UNESCO World Heritage Site through Les Amis.

*Contact info: 660-882-5946, info@les-amis.org, les-amis.org*



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Cinema St. Louis offers French programming at the annual Robert Classic French Film Festival and the Robert French and French-Language Focus at the Whitaker St. Louis International Film Festival (Nov.4-14, 2021).



The 13th Annual Robert Classic French Film Festival — presented by TV5MONDE and produced by Cinema St. Louis — celebrates St. Louis' Gallic heritage and France's cinematic legacy. This year's featured films again offer a revealing overview of French-language cinema.

The fest annually includes significant restorations, and this year features a quintet of such works: Melvin Van Peebles' "The Story of a Three-Day Pass," Diane Kurys' "Entre Nous," Joseph Losey's "Mr. Klein," Jacques Deray's "La piscine," and the extended director's cut of Jean-Jacques Beineix's "Betty Blue."

The fest also provides one of the few opportunities available in St. Louis to see films projected the old-school, time-honored way, with Agnes Varda's "Vagabond" screening from a 35mm print.

As part of our year-long Golden Anniversaries programming, which features films celebrating their 50th anniversaries, the fest includes a pair of films from 1971: François Truffaut's "Two English Girls" and Claude Jutra's French-Canadian "Mon oncle Antoine."

Completing the fest is our pandemic-delayed tribute to the late Anna Karina, who died in December 2019: Jean-Luc Godard's essential "Vivre sa vie."

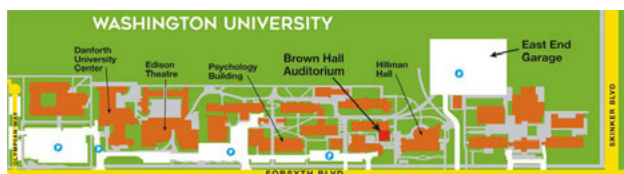
Every program features introductions and discussions by film or French scholars and critics.

All films are in French with English subtitles.

#### VENUES

**On Aug. 13-15: Washington University's Brown Hall Auditorium**, Forsyth Boulevard (two blocks west of Skinker Boulevard)

**On Aug. 20-22 and 27-29: Webster University's Winifred Moore Auditorium** in Webster Hall, 470 E. Lockwood Ave.



#### TICKET INFO

**Tickets:** Tickets are \$14 for general admission; \$11 for students and Cinema St. Louis members. Advance tickets can be purchased through the Cinema St. Louis website.

**Passes:** Two types of passes are available: **Five-Film Passes** are \$60, \$45 for CSL members; **All-Access Passes** are \$100, \$80 for CSL members.

**More Info:** 314-289-4150, [www.cinemastlouis.org](http://www.cinemastlouis.org)

#### PARKING

**Washington U.:** Free parking is available on the street and in the yellow-zone sections of lots along Forsyth Boulevard and in the nearby East End parking facility; no permits are required on weekends.

**Webster U.:** Free parking is available in the lots both in front of and behind Webster Hall; no permits are required on weekends.

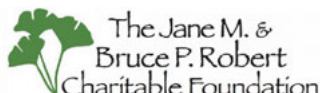
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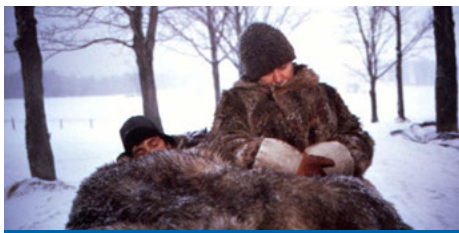
**ANN REPETTO**



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7:30 PM FRIDAY, AUG. 13, WASHINGTON U.

## Mon oncle Antoine

**Claude Jutra, Canada, 1971, 104 min., color, DCP**

Claude Jutra's evocative portrait of a boy's coming of age in wintry 1940s rural Quebec has been consistently cited by critics and scholars as the greatest Canadian film of all time. Delicate, naturalistic, and tinged with a striking mix of nostalgia and menace, "Mon oncle Antoine" follows Benoit, as he first encounters the twin terrors of sex and death, and his fellow villagers, who are living under the thumb of the local asbestos-mine owner. Set during one ominous Christmas, "Mon oncle Antoine" is a holiday film unlike any other and an authentically detailed illustration of childhood's twilight. Roger Ebert writes: "The key action in Claude Jutra's 'Mon Oncle Antoine' takes place over a period of 24 hours in a Quebec mining town. Although the film begins earlier in the year, everything comes to a focus beginning on the morning of Christmas Eve and closing on the dawn of Christmas. During that time, a young boy has had his life forever changed. This beloved Canadian film is rich in characters, glowing with life in the midst of death."

*With an introduction and post-film discussion by Lionel Cuillé, teaching professor in French and director of the cultural center French ConneXions at Washington University.*

Sponsored by  The Jane M. & Bruce P. Robert Charitable Foundation



7:30 PM SATURDAY, AUG. 14, WASHINGTON U.

## Entre Nous/Coup de foudre

**Diane Kurys, France, 1983, 110 min., color, new restoration, DCP**

An episodic chronicle of the painful dissolution of her parents' relationship — and the woman who precipitates it — Diane Kury's "Entre Nous" is intelligent and subtly compelling, a bittersweet remembrance of difficult times and enduring friendship. Although structured in the loose, fragmentary style of Kury's previous "Peppermint Soda," the film is darker in tone, richer in characterization, and charged with a subdued eroticism. Tracing the parallel downward curves of two marriages, "Entre Nous" delicately explores the wives' sustaining interrelationship, their mutual strength and resolve. Miou-Miou and Isabelle Huppert, who play nascent '50s feminists longing for a freedom they never fully articulate, are devastating, their character's frustration and hopeful dreams

visible in pained eyes and small gestures of entreaty. Vincent Canby in the New York Times writes: "'Entre Nous' is not a movie-as-short story. It's a novel-sized film, the kind that is so perfectly realized in vivid incidents that, not until the end does one realize how big it is and how effortlessly it has covered so much social and psychological territory." "Entre Nous" was nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar.

*With an introduction and post-film discussion by Colin Burnett, associate professor of Film & Media Studies at Washington U. and author of "The Invention of Robert Bresson: The Auteur and His Market."*

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7 PM SUNDAY, AUG. 15, WASHINGTON U.

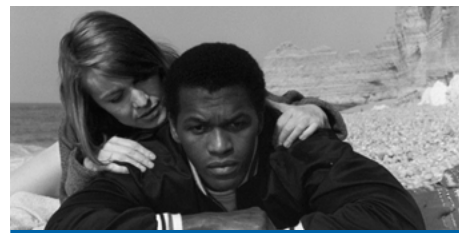
## Mr. Klein

**Joseph Losey, France, 1976, 123 min., color, new restoration, DCP**

Expatriate American director Joseph Losey ("The Prowler," "The Go-Between," "The Servant") worked primarily in the U.K. after his Blacklist exile from Hollywood, but in the latter part of his career, he made a trio of French-language films, beginning with "Mr. Klein." In Occupied France, Mr. Klein (Alain Delon) — a Roman Catholic — exploits the desperate situation of the Jews by buying and selling their works of art. But when a Jewish man of the same name surfaces in Paris, Klein comes under suspicion and experiences the persecution of his countrymen firsthand, eventually becoming ensnared in the so-called Vél d'Hiv Roundup, the mass arrest of Parisian Jews in July 1942. The LA Times writes: "Moody, elegantly disturbing and impeccably made by a master director, this story of blurred identities and casual immorality in German-occupied Paris benefits from what might be the best performance of star Alain Delon's long career as well as potent cameos by Jeanne Moreau, Michel Lonsdale and Juliet Berto." At the 1977 César Awards — France's Oscars — "Mr. Klein" won Best Film, Best Director, and Best Production Design (by the legendary Alexandre Trauner).

*With an introduction and post-film discussion by Pier Marton, video artist and self-described "Unlearning Specialist at the School of No Media." Marton has lectured about his work at MoMA in New York, among other museums; lectured at Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem; and taught at several leading U.S. universities. He regularly presents films at the St. Louis Holocaust Museum. He also has written for Cahiers du Cinéma.*

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7:30 PM FRIDAY, AUG. 20, WEBSTER U.

## The Story of a Three-Day Pass/La permission

**Melvin van Peebles, France/U.S., 1967, B&W, 86 min., English & French, new restoration, MP4 file**

Melvin Van Peebles's edgy, angsty, romantic first feature could never have been made in America. Unable to break into a segregated Hollywood, Van Peebles decamped to France, taught himself the language, and wrote a number of books in French, one of which, "La permission," would become his stylistically innovative feature debut. Turner (Harry Baird), an African-American soldier stationed in France, is granted a promotion and a three-day leave from base by his casually racist commanding officer and heads to Paris, where he finds whirlwind romance with a white woman (Nicole Berger) — but what happens to their love when his furlough is over? Van Peebles creates an exploration of the psychology of an interracial relationship as well as a commentary on France's contradictory attitudes about race that is playful, sarcastic, and stingingly subversive by turns, and that laid the foundation for the scorched-earth cinematic revolution he would unleash just a few years later with "Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song." The New Yorker's Richard Brody writes: "(The film) looks starkly, intimately, and imaginatively at the double life of a black soldier in the U.S. Army. All the more remarkably, it's a French film: Van Peebles made it while living in Paris, and although its protagonist is American and much of the film is in English, the movie reflects the stylistic variety and the freewheeling innovation of the French New Wave."

*With an introduction and post-film discussion by Diane Carson, professor emerita of film at St. Louis Community College at Meramec and film critic for KDHX (88.1 FM).*

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7:30 PM SATURDAY, AUG. 21, WEBSTER U.

## Vagabond/Sans toit ni loi

**Agnès Varda, France, 1985, 105 min., color, 35mm print**

With this screening of "Vagabond," one of her essential films, the Classic French Film Festival pays homage to the late Agnès Varda — director of such masterpieces as "Cléo from 5 to 7," "One Sings, the Other Doesn't," "The Gleaners and I," and "Faces Places") — who died last year

after a hugely diverse and influential career. Sandrine Bonnaire won the Best Actress César for her portrayal of the defiant young drifter Mona, found frozen to death in a ditch at the beginning of “Vagabond.” The film pieces together Mona’s story through flashbacks told by the people — played by a largely nonprofessional cast — she encountered on her travels, producing a splintered portrait of an enigmatic woman. With its sparse, poetic imagery, “Vagabond” is a stunner and won Varda the top prize at the Venice Film Festival. Little White Lies writes: “Vagabond” is a film which combines everything that Varda does best: a story ripped from the headlines which she refuses to fully fictionalise; a strong female lead who battles against a patriarchal system and against people who can’t comprehend her anxieties; a love of those liminal spaces between cities, roads, buildings — locations which appear as blank spaces on maps; a belief in building stories through small nuance rather than sweeping gestures.”

*With an introduction and post-film discussion by Kathy Corley, documentary filmmaker and professor emerita of film at Webster University.*

**Sponsored by Ann Repetto**



6:30 PM SUNDAY, AUG. 22, WEBSTER U.

## Betty Blue

**Jean-Jacques Beineix, France, 1986, 185 min., color, new restoration of extended director’s cut, Blu-ray**

When the easygoing would-be novelist Zorg (Jean-Hugues Anglade) meets the tempestuous Betty (Béatrice Dalle, in a magnetic breakout performance) in a sunbaked French beach town, it’s the beginning of a whirlwind love affair that sees the pair turn their backs on conventional society in favor of the hedonistic pursuit of freedom, adventure, and carnal pleasure. But as the increasingly erratic Betty’s grip on reality begins to falter, Zorg finds himself willing to do things he never expected to protect both her fragile sanity and their tenuous existence together. Adapted from the hit novel “37°2 le matin” by Philippe Djian, Jean-Jacques Beineix’s art-house smash — presented here in its extended director’s cut — is a sexy, crazy, careening joyride of a romance that burns with the passion and beyond-reason fervor of all-consuming love. Time Out New York writes: “Art movie or sex romp? Please don’t make us choose. For many teens growing up in the mid-1980s, French import ‘Betty Blue’ represented an opportunity to expand our global horizons, to mature in the presence of some tragic romance — and to gaze upon the bodacious Béatrice Dalle. But if ‘Betty Blue’ feasts on the bodies of its leads — Dalle plants a tender kiss on Anglade’s ‘sleepy, warm slug’ — it’s this director’s cut that fully establishes the movie’s artistic bona fides. More than an hour of material has been added to the narrative, which begins

in a splash of pink paint at a seaside resort, and then meanders to Paris and a cute hamlet where the couple’s attraction blooms.”

*With an introduction and post-film discussion by Andrew Wyatt, editor of and film critic for Cinema St. Louis’ The Lens and the Gateway Cinephile film blog.*

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7:30 PM FRIDAY, AUG. 27, WEBSTER U.

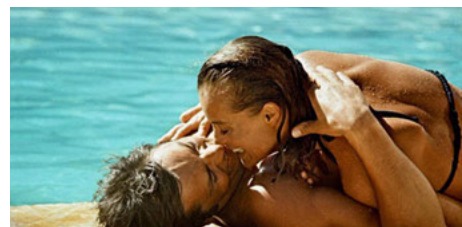
## Vivre sa vie/Vivre sa vie: Film en douze tableaux

**Jean-Luc Godard, 1962, 83 min., B&W, Blu-ray**

As a tribute to actress Anna Karina, who died in December 2019, the Classic French Film Festival offers “Vivre sa vie.” A turning point for Jean-Luc Godard, the film remains one of his most dynamic works, combining brilliant visual design with a tragic character study. The lovely Karina, Godard’s greatest muse, plays Nana, a young Parisian who aspires to be an actress but instead ends up a prostitute, with her downward spiral depicted in a series of discrete tableaux of daydreams and dances. Featuring some of Karina and Godard’s most iconic moments — from her movie-theater vigil with “The Passion of Joan of Arc” to her seductive pool-hall strut — “Vivre sa vie” is a landmark of the French New Wave that still surprises at every turn.

*With an introduction and post-film discussion by Pete Timmermann, director of the Webster U. Film Series and adjunct professor of film studies at Webster U.*

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7:30 PM SATURDAY, AUG. 28, WEBSTER U.

## La piscine

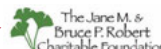
**Jacques Deray, 1969, France, 122 min., color, new restoration, Blu-ray**

The bright sun of the French Riviera is deceptive in this alluring work of slow-burn suspense from thriller specialist Jacques Deray and legendary screenwriter Jean-Claude Carrière (who died in February this year). Formerly one of European cinema’s most iconic real-life couples, Alain Delon and Romy Schneider reunited for this film, bringing a palpable erotic chemistry to their performances as the bronzed and beautiful vacationers whose summer holiday on the Côte d’Azur is interrupted by the arrival of an old acquaintance (Maurice Ronet) and his 18-year-old daughter (Jane Birkin) — unleashing a gathering

wave of sexual tension, jealousy, and sudden violence. A paragon of 1960s modernist cool thanks to effortlessly chic clothes and a loungey Michel Legrand score, “La piscine” dives deep to reveal sinister undercurrents roiling beneath its seductive surfaces. This screening serves as a modest homage to the prolific Carrière, perhaps best known for his provocative collaborations with Luis Buñuel. The LA Times writes: “Your summer movie cocktail of sun-dappled desire with a splash of bitter provocation over ice awaits with the welcome restoration of the 1969 French film ‘La Piscine.’ It’s two hours of beautiful people in tantalizing states of undress and unease that might just have you practicing your most chic mysterious chaise longue poses ahead of your next swim party.”

*With an introduction and post-film discussion by Calvin Wilson, theater critic for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, who also writes on film, dance, and music.*

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7 PM SUNDAY, AUG. 29, WEBSTER U.

## Two English Girls/Les deux Anglaises et le continent

**François Truffaut, 1971, France, 130 min., color, Blu-ray**

Aided by the marvelous, impressionist-styled images of cinematographer Nestor Almendros and a swooning score by Georges Delerue, François Truffaut transforms his second adaptation of a novel by Henri-Pierre Roché (author of “Jules and Jim”) into an overwhelming sensory experience. Trading that earlier, influential masterpiece’s vivacious energy for a more deliberate, dreamlike style, Truffaut tells of another turn-of-the-century romantic triangle, an even more regret-suffused tale of the elusiveness of love and the inexorable passage of time. The New York Times’ Vincent Canby writes: “François Truffaut’s ‘Two English Girls’ is a film of such beautiful, charming and comic discretion that it isn’t until the end that one realizes it’s also immensely sad and even brutal, though in the non-brutalizing way that truth can sometimes be. The film is filled with wonderful things, but I especially remember the sequence in which Anne and Claude spend a week in a cabin on a lake in Switzerland. ‘They were more resolute than in love,’ says the narrator. ‘Their program was simple: live first and define it later.’ At the end of the week, we see them in a long-shot, rowing away from the island — in separate rowboats.”

*With an introduction and post-film discussion by Robert Garrick, attorney, board member of the French-preservation nonprofit Les Amis, and former contributor to the davekehr.com film blog*

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*If you want to be the first to know about all Francophone events in St. Louis, join us on Facebook: Centre Francophone in St. Louis.*

The background of the Washington University in St. Louis advertisement is a photograph of a large, historic brick building with multiple towers and arched windows. An American flag flies from a tall pole in front of the building. The sky is a clear, light blue.

  
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