



14TH ANNUAL ROBERT

CLASSIC FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL

Co-presented by Cinema St. Louis and Webster University Film Series

**Aug. 5-7, 12-14, and 19-21
at Webster University**

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

Produced by

CINEMA ST. LOUIS

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WANT TO SPEAK FRENCH? REFRESH YOUR FRENCH CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE? CONTACT US!

This page sponsored by the Jane M. & Bruce P. Robert Charitable Foundation.



Centre Francophone at Webster University

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

Contact info: Salim Ayoub, 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



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: 314-721-3439, lesamis.stl@gmail.com, PO Box 11644, Clayton, MO 63105



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. 3-13 2022).

Robert CLASSIC FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL

cinemastlouis.org



The 14th Annual Robert Classic French Film Festival — sponsored by Jane M. & Bruce P. Robert Charitable Foundation — celebrates St. Louis’ Gallic heritage and France’s cinematic legacy. This year’s featured films span the decades from the 1920s through the 1990s, offering a revealing overview of French cinema.

The fest annually includes significant restorations, and this year features seven such works, including a brand-new restoration of Luis Bunuel’s “The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie,” which is part of our year-long Golden Anniversaries programming, which features films celebrating their 50th anniversaries.

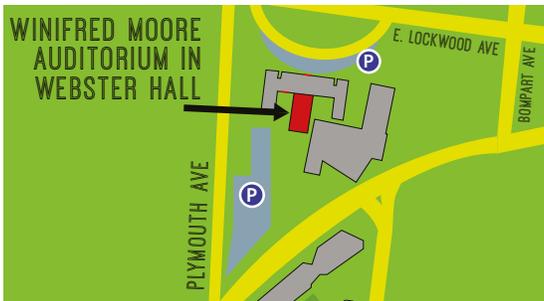
In honor of St. Louis’ own Josephine Baker and her installation in France’s Panthéon on Nov. 30 of last year, the fest will present her silent film debut, “Siren of the Tropics,” with an original score and live accompaniment by the Rats & People Motion Picture Orchestra.

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

All films are in French with English subtitles.

VENUES

Webster University’s Winifred Moore Auditorium
in Webster Hall, 470 E. Lockwood Ave.



TICKET INFO

Tickets: Tickets are \$15 for general admission; \$12 for students and Cinema St. Louis members. Webster U. students are admitted free. Advance tickets can be purchased through the Cinema St. Louis website.

Passes: Two types of passes are available: **Five-Film Passes** are \$65, \$50 for CSL members; **All-Access Passes** are \$120, \$95 for CSL members.

More Info: 314-289-4150, www.cinemastlouis.org

PARKING

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

CINEMA ST. LOUIS BOARD

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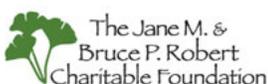
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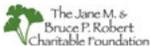
7:30 PM FRIDAY, AUG. 5

The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie/Le charme discret de la bourgeoisie

Luis Buñuel, France, 1972, 102 min., color, French, Latin & Spanish, restoration, DCP

In Luis Buñuel's deliciously satiric masterpiece, an upper-middle-class sextet sits down to a dinner that is continually delayed, their attempts to eat thwarted by vaudevillian events both actual and imagined, including terrorist attacks, military maneuvers, and ghostly apparitions. Stringing together a discontinuous, digressive series of absurdist set pieces, Buñuel and his screenwriting partner Jean-Claude Carrière send a cast of European-film greats — including Fernando Rey, Stéphane Audran, Delphine Seyrig, Jean-Pierre Cassel, and Bulle Ogier — through a maze of desire deferred, frustrated, and interrupted. The Oscar-winning pinnacle of Buñuel's late-career ascent as a feted maestro of the international art house, "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie" is also one of his most gleefully radical assaults on the values of the ruling class.

Intro and discussion by Cliff Froehlich, former executive director of Cinema St. Louis and adjunct professor of film studies at Webster University.

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7:30 PM SATURDAY, AUG. 6

Siren of the Tropics/La sirène des tropiques

Henri Étievant & Mario Nalpas (uncredited), France, 1927, 86 min., black & white, silent, restoration, DCP

With live accompaniment by the Rats & People Motion Picture Orchestra

Available only as a fragment for decades, "Siren of the Tropics" is Josephine Baker's feature-film debut. Made in 1927, around the time Baker was making a Paris splash as a

Folies Bergère star, "Siren" establishes the rags-to-riches, fairytale template from which her subsequent films would be cut. Baker plays Papitou, a free-spirited, animal-loving native girl who falls in love with Andre, a sophisticated young man who has been sent to the Parisian Antilles as a prospector. She is unaware that he is betrothed to another or that his work assignment is actually a perilous ruse concocted by his scheming boss. As the truth becomes known, Papitou finds herself pursuing Andre back to Paris, where fate intervenes. Will Papitou's new job as a music-hall performer (a natural role for La Baker) bring the romantic resolution she so desperately desires? Though silent, "Siren of the Tropics" abounds with musical energy, aided in no small part by Baker's innate screen magnetism. The film contains perhaps her greatest dance work on celluloid, the frenetic "Charleston."

Intro and discussion by Pier Marton, video artist and self-described "Unlearning Specialist at the School of No Media."

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7:30 PM SUNDAY, AUG. 7

Beau travail

Claire Denis, Djibouti/France, 1999, 93 min., color, French, Italian & Russian, restoration, DCP

With her ravishingly sensual take on Herman Melville's "Billy Budd, Sailor," Claire Denis firmly established herself as one of the great visual tone poets of our time. Amid the azure waters and sunbaked desert landscapes of Djibouti, a French Foreign Legion sergeant (Denis Lavant) sows the seeds of his own ruin as his obsession with a striking young recruit (Grégoire Colin) plays out to the thunderous, operatic strains of Benjamin Britten. Denis and cinematographer Agnès Godard fold military and masculine codes of honor, colonialism's legacy, destructive jealousy, and repressed desire into shimmering, hypnotic images that ultimately explode in one of the most startling and unforgettable endings in all of modern cinema.

Intro and discussion by Diane Carson, professor emerita of film at St. Louis Community College at Meramec and film critic for KDHX (88.1 FM).

Sponsored by **Ann Repetto**



7:30 PM FRIDAY, AUG. 12

Fantastic Planet/La planète sauvage

René Laloux, Czechoslovakia/France, 1973, 72 min., color, French, restoration, DCP

Nothing else has ever looked or felt like director René Laloux's animated marvel "Fantastic Planet," a politically minded and visually inventive work of science fiction. The film is set on a distant planet called Ygam, where enslaved humans (Oms) are the playthings of giant blue native inhabitants (Draags). After Terr, kept as a pet since infancy, escapes from his gigantic child captor, he is swept up by a band of radical fellow Oms who are resisting the Draags' oppression and violence. With its eerie, coolly surreal cutout animation by Roland Topor; brilliant psychedelic jazz score by Alain Goraguer; and wondrous creatures and landscapes, this Cannes-awarded 1973 counterculture classic is a perennially compelling statement against conformity and violence.

Intro and discussion by Andrew Wyatt, editor of and film critic for Cinema St. Louis' The Lens blog.



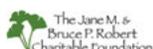
7:30 PM SATURDAY, AUG. 13

Breathless/À bout de souffle

Jean-Luc Godard, France, 1960, 90 min., black & white, English & French, restoration, DCP

There was before "Breathless," and there was after "Breathless." Jean-Luc Godard burst onto the film scene in 1960 with this jazzy, free-form, and sexy homage to the American film genres that inspired him as a writer for Cahiers du cinéma. With its lack of polish, surplus of attitude, anything-goes crime narrative, and effervescent young stars Jean-Paul Belmondo and Jean Seberg, "Breathless" helped launch the French New Wave and ensured that cinema would never be the same. The program serves as a tribute to the charismatic French actor Belmondo, who died on Sept. 6 of last year.

Intro and discussion by Kathy Corley, documentary filmmaker and professor emerita of film at Webster University.

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7:30 PM SUNDAY, AUG. 14

Amélie/Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain

Jean-Pierre Jeunet, France, 2001, 122 min., color, French, DCP

“Amélie” is a fanciful comedy about a young woman who discretely orchestrates the lives of the people around her, creating a world exclusively of her own making. Shot in more than 80 Parisian locations, acclaimed director Jean-Pierre Jeunet (“Delicatessen,” “The City of Lost Children”) invokes his incomparable visionary style to capture the exquisite charm and mystery of modern-day Paris through the eyes of a beautiful ingenue.

Intro and discussion by **Jean-Louis Pautrot**, professor of French and International Studies in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures at Saint Louis University.



7:30 PM FRIDAY, AUG. 19

The Battle of Algiers/La battaglia di Algeri

Gillo Pontecorvo, Algeria/Italy, 1966, 121 min., black & white, Arabic & French, Blu-ray

One of the most influential political films in history, “The Battle of Algiers,” by Gillo Pontecorvo, vividly re-creates a key year in the tumultuous Algerian struggle for independence from the occupying French in the 1950s. As violence escalates on both sides, children shoot soldiers at point-blank range, women plant bombs in cafés, and French soldiers resort to torture to break the will of the insurgents. Shot on the streets of Algiers in documentary style, the film is a case study in modern warfare, with its terrorist attacks and the brutal techniques used to combat them. Pontecorvo’s tour de force has astonishing relevance today.

Intro and discussion by **Salim Ayoub**, Bruce P. Robert Endowed Professor in French and Francophone Studies and director of the Centre Francophone at Webster University.

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7:30 PM SATURDAY, AUG. 20

Le cercle rouge

Jean-Pierre Melville, 1970, France, 140 min., color, new restoration, DCP

Alain Delon plays a master thief, fresh out of prison, who crosses paths with a notorious escapee (Gian Maria Volontè) and an alcoholic ex-cop (Yves Montand). The unlikely trio plot a heist, against impossible odds, until a relentless inspector and their own pasts seal their fates. With its honorable antiheroes, coolly atmospheric cinematography, and breathtaking set pieces, “Le cercle rouge” is the quintessential film by Jean-Pierre Melville—the master of ambiguous, introspective crime cinema.

Intro and discussion by **Robert Garrick**, attorney, former contributor to the *davekehr.com* film blog, and contributor to *Cinema St. Louis’ The Lens* blog.

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& Robert Garrick



7:30 PM SUNDAY, AUG. 21

Irma Vep

Olivier Assayas, France, 1996, 99 min., color, English & French, restoration, DCP

Olivier Assayas’s live-wire international breakthrough stars a magnetic Maggie Cheung as a version of herself: a Hong Kong action-movie star who arrives in Paris to play the latex-clad lead in a remake of Louis Feuillade’s classic silent crime serial “Les vampires.” What she finds is a behind-the-scenes tangle of barely controlled chaos as egos clash, romantic attractions simmer, and an obsessive director (a cannily cast Jean-Pierre Léaud) drives himself to the brink to realize his vision. Blending blasts of silent cinema, martial-arts flicks, and the music of Sonic Youth and Luna into a hallucinatory swirl of postmodern cool, Assayas composes in “Irma Vep” a witty critique of the ’90s French film industry and the perennial tension between art and commercial entertainment.

Intro and discussion by **Joshua Ray**, film critic for *Cinema St. Louis’ The Lens* blog and host of *The Lens* podcast.

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Grizzell & Co. applauds the 14th Annual Robert Classic French Film Festival for celebrating Saint Louis' Gallic heritage and France's cinematic legacy.

