

# MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **MOVING IMAGE PRESENTS 'ALAIN RESNAIS': THE MOST COMPLETE RETROSPECTIVE OF THE DIRECTOR'S FILMS EVER PRESENTED IN NEW YORK**

**February 25–March 20, 2011**

Alain Resnais (b. 1922), the French New Wave director whose distinctive films explore themes of time, memory, history, and desire, will be the subject of a major retrospective at Museum of the Moving Image from February 25 through March 20, 2011. The series—the most complete retrospective of Resnais's films ever shown in New York—will include all eighteen of his feature films, from the landmark works *Hiroshima*, *Mon Amour* and *Last Year at Marienbad* to his most recent, *Wild Grass*; rarely seen documentary shorts (*Night and Fog*, *Guernica*, *Statues Also Die* (with Chris Marker), *The Song of Styrene*); and *Memories of Last Year at Marienbad*, the 2010 behind-the-scenes documentary about *Marienbad*, narrated by Volker Schlöndorff who served as assistant director on Resnais's film.

Most films will be shown in imported 35mm prints that are not in distribution in the United States, and on Saturday, March 5, satirist/cartoonist Jules Feiffer will introduce the screening of *I Want to Go Home*, for which he won a best screenplay prize at the Venice Film Festival.

*Alain Resnais* is made possible with generous support by the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, New York.

Resnais's films often explore connections between historical and personal events, placing romantic dramas against the backdrop of war and political turmoil. His intellectual concerns are capacious, ranging from art history to literature to philosophy to science. Yet as intellectually rigorous as Resnais's films are, they are also both deeply human and deeply playful. Profoundly interested in theatricality, and keenly attuned to psychological nuance, Resnais is one of cinema's great directors of actors. And as evidenced by the joyful whimsicality of his latest film, *Wild Grass*, the seriousness of Resnais's films goes hand in hand with a wondrous sense of enchantment, of the idea of cinema—and life—as a kind of game.

## **Schedule for *Alain Resnais* (February 25–March 20, 2011)**

All films directed by Alain Resnais unless otherwise noted. All films will be shown in either the Main Theater or the Bartos Screening Room at Museum of the Moving Image, 35 Avenue at 37 Street, Astoria, and are included with paid Museum admission.

### ***Hiroshima, Mon Amour (Hiroshima mon amour)***

Friday, February 25, 7:30 p.m.

1959, 90 mins. Imported 35mm print. Written by Marguerite Duras. With Emmanuelle Riva, Eiji Okada. A French actress and Japanese architect meet in Hiroshima; their passionate affair is haunted by personal and historical memories. Jean-Luc Godard wrote of this modernist masterpiece, which is at once sensuous and rigorously cerebral, that “seeing Hiroshima gives you the impression of watching a film that would have been absolutely inconceivable in terms of what you already know of cinema.”

### ***Night and Fog and other Short Documentaries***

Saturday, February 26, 2:00 p.m.

Imported 35mm prints from the French Foreign Ministry.

#### ***Night and Fog (Nuit et brouillard)***

1955, 32 mins. Photographed by Ghislain Cloquet. Resnais contrasts haunting tracking shots through present-day Auschwitz with devastating archival footage filmed just after liberation, to create one of the most powerful documentaries ever made.

#### ***Guernica***

1950, 12 mins. Fragmented images of paintings and sculptures by Picasso from 1906 to the creation of his famous anti-war painting Guernica are set against an ode by surrealist poet Paul Eluard, in a cubist study that comments on Spain's ongoing struggles against fascism.

#### ***Statues Also Die (Les Statues meurent aussi)***

1953, 27 mins. Dir. Alain Resnais and Chris Marker. Written by Marker. Photographed by Ghislain Cloquet. Rarely screened, this rich essay film about art, mortality, and history that looks at the place of African culture within European civilization, is a remarkable collaboration between Resnais and Chris Marker, filled with themes of their work to come. “If you come across it in any venue that's showing a Resnais retrospective, you should drop everything to go and see it,” writes Jonathan Rosenbaum.

#### ***All the Memory of the World (Toute la mémoire du monde)***

1956, 22 mins. Music by Maurice Jarre. Foretelling the visual style of Last Year at Marienbad, this meditation on knowledge is comprised of a series of haunting tracking shots through endless shelves of newspapers and books at the French National Library. “Confronted with these bulging repositories,” intones the narrator, “man is assailed by fear of being engulfed by this mass of words.”

### ***Memories of Last Year at Marienbad (Souvenirs d'une année à Marienbad)***

Saturday, February 26, 4:00 p.m. and

Sunday, February 27, 2:00 p.m.

2010, 46 Mins. Directed by Françoise Spira. Narrated by Volker Schlöndorff. A revelatory and entertaining behind-the-scenes documentary made with 8mm footage photographed by actress Françoise Spira on the set of Resnais's enigmatic and dreamlike 1961 masterpiece. Volker Schlöndorff, assistant director on Resnais's film, edited Spira's footage, and added a

voice-over commentary, and clips from the film to put the rehearsal footage into context.

***Last Year at Marienbad (L'année dernière à Marienbad)***

Saturday, February 26, 5:30p.m. and Sunday, February 27, 3:30 p.m.

1961, 94 mins. 35mm print from Rialto Pictures. Written by Alain Robbe-Grillet. With Delphine Seyrig. In a sumptuous, baroque grand hotel, an elegant man tries to convince a beautiful woman that they have met a year before, setting off an enigmatic and dreamlike series of events in Resnais's luscious, mysterious film. In many ways the quintessential arthouse movie, *Last Year at Marienbad*, with Delphine Seyrig's Coco Chanel gowns and Sacha Vierney's exquisite widescreen black-and-white photography, is both sensually and cerebrally engaging. "Hopelessly retro, eternally avant-garde, and one of the most influential films ever made," wrote Village Voice critic J. Hoberman.

***Muriel (Muriel ou Le temps d'un retour)***

Saturday, February 26, 7:30 p.m.

1963, 115 mins. Imported 35mm print from the French Foreign Ministry. With Delphine Seyrig. A widow who lives in her antique shop awaits the arrival of a former lover; her stepson is haunted by the memory of a young girl he tortured and killed during the Algerian war. At once more subtle and emotionally direct than his better known *Last Year at Marienbad* and *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*, Resnais's first color film is one of his best, described by Dave Kehr as "a subtle, precise, and wrenching film."

***La Guerre est finie***

Sunday, February 27, 6:00 p.m.

1966, 121 mins. 35mm print from Academy Film Archive. With Yves Montand, Ingrid Thulin, Geneviève Bujold. Montand is Diego, a world-weary revolutionary without a cause, a 40-year-old shuttling back and forth between France and his native Spain and trying to come to terms with his restless political beliefs. Resnais uses flash-forwards, flashbacks, and fantasy sequences to capture Diego's endless unease, and his status as a man without a country, or even a solid sense of identity.

***Je t'aime, je t'aime***

Friday, March 4, 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 6, 5:30 p.m.

1968, 91 mins. Imported 35mm print from Les Grands Films Classiques. With Claude Riche, Anouk Ferjac, Olga Georges-Picot. Described by Raymond Durnat as "science fiction tragedy in comic strip images," *Je t'aime, je t'aime* is about a failed suicide who agrees to become a guinea pig for a time travel experiment. He finds himself trapped in an infinite series of moments revolving around a girlfriend whose death he may—or may not—have caused. Ahead of its time—and a clear influence on Cronenberg—this is one of Resnais's most underrated films.

Preceded by ***The Song of Styrene (La chant du styrene)*** 1958, 22 mins. 35mm print from the French Foreign Ministry. Written by Raymond Queneau. Commissioned as a documentary to explain, and celebrate, the production of plastic, this widescreen color short is a playful, rigorous essay film that moves between abstract visual pleasure and philosophical exploration of the effects of industrialization.

### ***Stavisky***

Saturday, March 5, 2:00 p.m.

1974, 120 mins. 35mm print from French Foreign Ministry. With Jean-Paul Belmondo and Charles Boyer. Based on the true story of a con artist who nearly brought France to financial and political ruin in the 1930s, *Stavisky* is Resnais's lushest and most opulent production, featuring Art Deco sets, a lush musical score by Stephen Sondheim, and a magnetic central performance by Jean-Paul Belmondo. A meditation of the fragility of time and beauty, *Stavisky* was a triumphant return to filmmaking by Resnais after a hiatus following the commercial failure of *Je t'aime, je t'aime*.

### ***Far From Vietnam (Loin du Vietnam)***

Saturday, March 5, 4:30 p.m.

1967, 115 mins. 35mm print from Archives français du film—CNC. Dirs. Chris Marker, Joris Ivens, William Klein, Claude Lelouch, Agnès Varda, Jean-Luc Godard, Alain Resnais. To protest American aggression in Vietnam, Chris Marker organized a group of filmmakers to put together an impassioned, eclectic experiment in agitprop cinema, a blend of war footage, interviews, fictional sketches, and documentary footage. In Resnais's section, a confounded young man walks around an apartment reciting passages from Herman Kahn's *On Escalation* to an impassive young woman.

### ***I Want to Go Home***

Saturday, March 5, 7:00 p.m.

#### **With Jules Feiffer in person**

1989, 100 mins. 35mm print from MK2. Written by Jules Feiffer. With Adolph Green, Linda Lavin, Gérard Depardieu. Indulging his longtime love of comic strips, Gershwin music, and pulp fiction, Resnais teamed with American cartoonist/satirist Jules Feiffer to make this delightfully oddball cross-cultural spoof, starring Adolph Green (writer of *Singin' in the Rain* and *The Band Wagon*) as a celebrated cartoonist who travels from Cleveland to Paris to appear at an exhibition of his work, and visit his daughter, who is studying at the Sorbonne (under a professor played by Gérard Depardieu). Jules Feiffer, whose script won the best screenplay award at the Venice Film Festival, will introduce the screening.

### ***Not on the Lips (Pas sur la bouche)***

Sunday, March 6, 3:00 p.m.

2003, 115 mins. With Sabine Azéma, Audrey Tautou. Resnais faithfully and playfully adapts a farcical 1925 operetta about a society lady, her industrialist husband, and his new American business partner (among other complications). The fanciful, deliberately theatrical style, with the actors singing in punning verse and making asides to the camera, on lavish sets inspired by early Lubitsch, made the film a critical success in France.

### ***Mon Oncle d'Amérique***

Friday, March 11, 7:00 p.m.

1980, 125 mins. 35mm print from the French Foreign Ministry. With Gérard Depardieu, Nicole Garcia, Roger Pierre. Scenes from the intersecting lives of three characters—a farm boy turned factory worker, a failed actress, and a self-centered intellectual—are intercut with commentary by the real behavioral scientist Henri Laborit. Fluid, witty, and engaging, this was one of the

biggest commercial successes of Resnais's career.

***Private Fears in Public Places (Coeurs)***

Saturday, March 12, 7:00 p.m.

2006, 120 mins. 35mm print from the French Foreign Ministry. With Sabine Azéma, Lambert Wilson, André Dussollier. With a steady snowfall as the backdrop, Resnais's poignant and graceful adaptation of Alan Ayckbourn's play about six loosely-connected and lonely people is a lyrical, stylish study of urban alienation. "Accessible, pleasant, dreamy, a touch goofy and melancholic." (Manohla Dargis, *The New York Times*).

***Mélo***

Saturday, March 12, 4:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 13, 3:30 p.m.

1986, 112 mins. 35mm print from MK2. With Sabine Azéma, Fanny Ardant, Pierre Arditi, and André Dussollier. Resnais made one of his greatest films by adapting a somewhat trashy 1929 melodrama by little-known playwright Henry Bernstein. The story, about a violinist who falls in love with his best friend's wife, unfolds under a painted sky in a deliberately theatrical, dreamlike world. "Resnais invests the original meaning of 'melodrama' (drama with music) with exceptional power and beauty, cutting and moving his camera with impeccable dramatic logic to give the performances maximum voltage." (Jonathan Rosenbaum).

***Life is a Bed of Roses (La vie est un roman)***

Saturday, March 12, 2:00 p.m.

1983, 110 mins. 35mm print from New Yorker Films. With Vittorio Gassman, Geraldine Chaplin, Fanny Ardant. In one of his most audacious time-hopping experiments, Resnais links stories from three different time periods, all set in the same futuristic château. A rich Utopian builds a refuge, just before the outbreak of World War I; in 1982, the building is a school for intellectuals studying "The education of the imagination;" further in the future, two children turn it into a fantasy world of damsels and dragons.

***Wild Grass (Les herbes folles)***

Friday, March 18, 7:30 p.m.

2009, 104 mins. 35mm print from Sony Pictures Classics With André Dussollier, Sabine Azéma, Emmanuelle Devos, Mathieu Amalric. A lost wallet opens an adventure of romance and imagination between an elderly househusband and a single dentist who flies airplanes as a hobby. The tone may be whimsical, but the film brilliantly captures the freewheeling, jazz-like inventiveness of the novella by Christian Gailly.

***Love unto Death (L'amour à mort)***

Saturday, March 19, 2:30 p.m.

1984, 92 mins. 35mm print from the French Foreign Ministry. With Sabine Azéma, Fanny Ardant, André Dussollier, Jean Dasté. A bold and austere experiment in form and music, *Love unto Death* is a love story about an archaeologist who has a near-death experience in the film's first scene. The film, which follows four characters, is composed of 52 discrete sections, with passages of avant-garde music played against a black background between scenes.

***Same Old Song (On connaît la chanson)***

Saturday, March 19, 4:30 p.m.

1997, 120 mins. 35mm print from the French Foreign Ministry. With Pierre Arditi, Sabine Azéma, André Dussolier, Agnès Jaoui. Written by Agnès Jaoui. A Parisian tour guide, two real estate agents, and several other characters look for happiness, or at least a good antidepressant, in this enchanting musical that plays like an homage to Dennis Potter, as characters reveal their thoughts and feelings by lip-synching to popular songs by Maurice Chevalier, Edith Piaf, and Johnny Halliday.

***Providence***

Saturday, March 19, 7:30 p.m.

1977, 110 mins. 35mm print from Jupiter Films. With Dirk Bogarde, John Gielgud, Ellen Burstyn, David Warner. Resnais's first film in English is an autumnal, acid-sharp psychological portrait set largely inside the mind of a dying novelist, in a career-crowning performance by John Gielgud. A family drama that moves between dream and reality, the film has been cited as an influence on David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive*.

***Smoking*** (1993, 140 mins.)

Sunday, March 20, 4:00 p.m.

***No Smoking*** (1993, 145 mins.)

Sunday, March 20, 7:00 p.m.

35mm print from the French Foreign Ministry. With Pierre Arditi and Sabine Azéma. The consequences of a woman's decision whether or not to light up a single cigarette branches out into a dozen different storylines and parallel universes in this pair of interconnected feature films freely adapted from Alan Ayckbourn's *Intimate Exchanges*. The films have been described as interactive; they can be seen alone or together, and in either order. Although they won best picture, director, actor, and set design at the Cesars, they are rarely shown in the United States.

**Press contact:**

Tomoko Kawamoto / 718.777.6830 / tkawamoto@movingimage.us

## MUSEUM INFORMATION

Hours: Tuesday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 10:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Closed on Monday except for holiday openings).

Film Screenings and other programs: See above for series schedule. Additional information is available at <http://movingimage.us/films>

Museum Admission: \$10.00 for adults; \$7.50 for persons over 65 and for students with ID; \$5.00 for children ages 3-18. Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Paid admission includes film screenings (except for special ticketed events and Friday evenings) Tickets for special screenings and events may be purchased in advance by phone at 718.777.6800.

Location: 35 Avenue at 37 Street in Astoria.

Subway: R or M trains (R on weekends) to Steinway Street. N or Q trains to 36 Avenue.

Program Information: Telephone: 718.777.6888; Website: <http://movingimage.us>

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and its operations are made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation). The Museum also receives generous support from numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals. For more information, please visit <http://movingimage.us>.