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## From Academy Award Winners To Films On The Jewish Experience, The 2014 Tournées French Film Festival Returns To Roger Williams University

*Programming held in collaboration with Flickers: Rhode Island International film Festival to feature Six Feature Films and French Shorts; free to the General Public*

**WHAT:** The **Second Annual RWU Tournées French Film Festival** at Roger Williams University

**WHEN:** March 30 – April 2, 2014

**WHERE:** Roger Williams University, 1 Old Ferry Road, Bristol, RI

**WHO:** Roger Williams University in collaboration with FLICKERS: Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF)

**HOW MUCH:** Free

**WHY:** To Celebrate The Art And Craft Of French Filmmaking.

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**BRISTOL, RI** (March 18, 2014): **FLICKERS: Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF)** and **Roger Williams University (RWU)** are proud to collaborate in the presentation of the **Second Annual RWU Tournées French Film Festival**. The Festival will take place over a four-day period, **March 30-April 2, 2014** and will be free to the general public and campus community. The campus of Roger Williams University in Bristol, RI will serve as the host location for the Festival

The **Tournées French Film Festival** will present six new important French feature films, (all with English subtitles), along with a selection of shorts films that **FLICKERS: Rhode Island International Film Festival** will premiere through its partnership with **UNIIFRANCE** that will precede each feature.

Festival screenings at Roger Williams University will take place at the **Mary Tefft White Cultural Center** and **Global Heritage Hall**, Room GH01 on the RWU Campus. The series opens with two films representing the Jewish Experience, part of an ongoing program at the University developed with the RWU Hillel and the Spiritual Life Office. (This semester's programming concludes with the Roving Eye International Film Festival, April 6-13<sup>th</sup> on the RWU campus).

"Through film the Jewish Experience series tells the stories of the Jewish experience globally—stories of joy and sorrow, faith, diasporas, rich culture, fear and hope—stories that must be told again and again," said the Rev. Nancy Hamlin Soukup, RWU University Multi-faith Chaplain.

The theme for this year's Festival is "Connecting through Storytelling," and will be introduced on Sunday March 30<sup>th</sup> by **Magali Boutiot**, Mission culturelle et universitaire aux Etats-Unis Consulat de France à Boston.

For the past few decades, an array of contemporary French filmmakers have sought to use film as a means to wrest us from the illusions provided by the narrative of global connectivity. Often focusing on protagonists who exist outside dominant culture, or who feel detached from it, these filmmakers have tried to illuminate the realities of social oppression, isolation and alienation; while simultaneously foregrounding the powerful human desire for acceptance, intimacy and belonging.

The **Second Annual RWU Tournées French Film Festival** offers films that continue on in this vein. Each film centers on characters struggling to make social connections in a world that is often constructed to keep them apart.

Aesthetically, these films eschew Hollywood's affinity for vibrant imagery, hyper-kinetic editing, broad characterizations and closed endings. Long-takes, hand-held-cameras, natural dialogue, complex characters and ambiguous narratives are used to create cinematic experiences that feel like life-as-it-is-lived; these are all films that invite the audience to engage with the world, rather than escape from it.

As part of this year's selections, the 2014 Tournées French Film Festival will showcase two Academy Award winning feature films: **"The Artist,"** written, directed, and co-edited by Michel Hazanavicius, produced by Thomas Langmann and starring Jean Dujardin and Bérénice Bejo. The story takes place in Hollywood, between 1927 and 1932, and focuses on the relationship of an older silent film star and a rising young actress as silent cinema falls out of fashion and is replaced by the "talkies;" and, **"Amour,"** directed by the Austrian filmmaker Michael Haneke, starring Jean-Louis Trintignant, Emmanuelle Riva and Isabelle Huppert. The film from a famous quote from an iconic actress: "Old age ain't no place for sissies," Bette Davis is reported to have said, and the longer age lasts, the less of a sissy you can be.

The **Second Annual RWU Tournées French Film Festival** is made possible with the support of the *Cultural Services of the French Embassy and the French Ministry of Culture (CNC), The Florence Gould Foundation, the Grand Marnier Foundation and highbrow entertainment.* The Festival is presented in collaboration with *the Office of the Dean of Feinstein College of Arts and Sciences of the; the Department of Communications; the Department of Theatre; Hillel; the Spiritual Life Program, the RWU Film Production Club and the Flickers: Rhode Island International Film Festival.*

The Program Directors for the Second Annual RWU Tournées French Film Festival are **Dr. Roberta Adams**, Associate Dean of Humanities and Performing Arts; **Dr. Jeffrey Martin**, Professor of Theatre and Chair, Department of Performing Arts; and **George T. Marshall**, Executive Director, FLICKERS: Rhode Island International Film Festival. Technical support has been provided by the RWU Film Production Club. For more information, please go to [www.RWU.edu](http://www.RWU.edu) or [www.RIFilmFest.org](http://www.RIFilmFest.org).

## **TOURNEES FILM FESTIVAL 2014 SCREENING SCHEDULE:**

### **LE CHAT DU RABBIN (THE RABBI'S CAT)**

**Date and Time:** Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.

**Location:** Mary Tefft White Cultural Center, RWU Library

**Director:** Antoine Delesvaux, Joann Sfar

**Screenplay:** Jean-François Laguionie, Anik Leray

**Voices:** Lola: Jessica Monceau; Claire: Chloé Berthier; Gom: Julien Bouanich; Plume: Thierry Jahn

**Running time:** 76' **Production:** France, 2011 **Rating:** Not Rated

Based on co-director Joann Sfar's popular comic-book series of the same name, *The Rabbi's Cat* features a remarkable, if hairless and giant-eared, feline at its center. This wryly philosophical, beautifully drawn, meticulously detailed animated film takes place during the 1920s and '30s in Algiers, where the kitty of the title is preparing for his bar mitzvah. Having

previously devoured his master's parrot, the cat now has the power of speech, which he uses, as a devout soul should, to constantly question and probe his faith. Soon the cat and the rabbi set out for Ethiopia, encountering along the way a host of characters of various creeds and ethnicities. During their trek, the Jewish leader and his inquisitive pet will face a few treacherous situations. But their voyage ultimately, upliftingly results in interfaith harmony and a richer understanding of their own religious identity and history.

### **ALIYAH**

**Date and Time:** Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 p.m.

**Location:** Mary Tefft White Cultural Center, RWU Library

**Director:** Elie Wajeman

**Screenplay:** Gaëlle Macé, Elie Wajeman

**Cast:** Alex Raphaelson: Pio Marmaï, Isaac Raphaelson: Cédric Kahn, Jeanne: Adèle Haenel, Mathias: Guillaume Gouix

**Runing Time:** 90' **Production:** France , 2012 **Rating:** Not rated

The title of Elie Wajeman's striking first film refers to the immigration of Jews to Israel; it is there that hashish dealer Alex Raphaelson, currently living in a gritty section of Paris, hopes to start over by helping a cousin open up a restaurant in Tel Aviv. But many obstacles face Alex as he prepares for this voyage—primarily his burdensome older brother, Isaac (Cédric Kahn, a talented writer-director making a rare appearance in front of the camera), who constantly leans on his sibling for money. In between Hebrew lessons, Alex, drained of his funds by his needy, manipulative brother, begins selling harder drugs—which places him at the mercy of extremely dangerous men—to pay for his trip to Israel. Complicating his departure further, Alex falls in love with Jeanne, a fiercely intelligent, independent graduate student. Wajeman's debut powerfully lays bare the onerous pull of family ties and intelligently questions whether, in relocating thousands of miles away and starting anew, we can ever really escape ourselves.

### **AMOUR**

**Date and Time:** Monday, March 31<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

**Location:** Mary Tefft White Cultural Center, RWU Library

**Director:** Michael Haneke

**Screenplay:** Michael Haneke

**Cast:** Georges: Jean-Louis Trintignant, Anne: Emmanuelle Riva, Eva: Isabelle Huppert, Alexandre: Alexandre Tharaud, Geoff: William Shimell

**Runing Time:** 127' **Production:** France, Germany, Austria, 2012 **Rating:** PG-13

**AWARDS:** Best Foreign Language Film – Academy Awards (2013); Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Director, Best Film, Best Original Screenplay – César Awards (2013)

A staggering, profound examination of love, Michael Haneke's compassionate film centers on Georges and Anne, long-married octogenarians and retired music teachers who still take great delight in each other. Their bonds will be tested, however, as Anne grows increasingly debilitated, both mentally and physically. In depicting what has rarely been shown onscreen before—two elderly people struggling to maintain their dignity in the face of the unremitting cruelties of aging—Haneke brilliantly shows that the greatest crucible of life's final chapter is figuring out how to best honor the past. Never sentimentalizing his two main characters, Haneke nonetheless portrays them tenderly; viewers grow deeply attached to Georges and Anne thanks to the astonishing performances by Trintignant and Riva. Both actors are legends of French cinema: he is best known for Eric Rohmer's *My Night at Maud's* (1969), and she for Alain Resnais's *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (1959). Watching these two icons, we are reminded of nothing less than our own mortality—and our own past and present relationships.

### **MONSIEUR LAZHAR**

**Date and Time:** Tuesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

**Location:** Mary Tefft White Cultural Center, RWU Library

**Director:** Philippe Falardeau

**Screenplay:** Philippe Falardeau

**Cast:** Bachir Lazhar: Mohamed Fellag, Alice L'Écuyer: Sophie Nélisse, Simon: Émilien Néron, Marie-Frédérique: Marie-Ève Beauregard

**Running time:** 94' **Production:** Canada, 2011 **Rating:** PG-13

**AWARDS:** Best Canadian Feature Film – Toronto International Film Festival (2011)

"A classroom is a place of friendship, of work, of courtesy, a place of life," says the new teacher of the title to his sixth-grade students in a Montreal public school. That profoundly touching statement evinces the deep respect Monsieur Lazhar (the phenomenal Mohamed Fellag) has for his charges, who are still reeling from a beloved teacher's very public suicide. Writer-director Philippe Falardeau's unforgettable movie, based on a one-person play by Evelyne de la Chenelière, explores the intricate process by which M. Lazhar earns the respect and trust of his pupils, some of them the children of immigrants or, like this devoted instructor, recent arrivals to Quebec. As the reasons for M. Lazhar's immigration to Canada from Algeria are made clear, so, too is his rather unconventional method for applying for the teaching position. Yet this educator isn't the film's only multifaceted character: the preteen students are also fascinatingly complex, struggling with roiling emotions and troubles at home. *Monsieur Lazhar* is the rarest of movies about education: one that avoids clichés and sentimentality in favor of honesty and clear-eyed compassion.

### **COCO AVANT CHANEL (COCO BEFORE CHANEL)**

**Date and Time:** Wednesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 5:00 p.m.

**Location:** Global Heritage Hall, GH01

**Director:** Anne Fontaine

**Screenplay:** Anne Fontaine & Camille Fontaine, based on Edmonde Charles-Roux's novel "Le Temps Chanel" **Cast:** Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel: Audrey Tautou; Étienne Balsan: Benoit Poelvoorde; Arthur 'Boy' Capel: Alessandro Nivola Adrienne Chanel: Marie Gillain ; Emilienne d'Alençon: Emmanuelle Devos

**Running time:** 110' **Production:** France, 2009 **Rating:** PG-13

Anne Fontaine's thoughtful exploration of the pre-fame life of the world's greatest fashion designer focuses on Coco Chanel during the Belle Époque. The film opens in 1893 with a powerfully grim scene of 10-year old Coco and her sister unceremoniously dumped at an orphanage and ends around World War I, a few years before the Chanel empire is launched. In her strongest performance to date, Audrey Tautou expertly conveys Chanel's struggle against the formidable limitations that an ambitious, non-wealthy woman at the time faced—particularly one who refused to marry. The designer, a proud peasant who wasn't ashamed to sometimes distort the truth, sought to liberate women from the oppressive fashion of the time: suffocating corsets, pounds of extra material, and hats that looked like "meringues." Fontaine's complex biopic refuses to completely lionize its subject, insisting on examining the compromises Chanel had to make. Though she may have been aided by her rich lovers, namely millionaire Étienne Balsan and English industrialist Arthur "Boy" Capel, Chanel remained fiercely independent, becoming a great visionary—as evident in the film's fantastic coda, when an older Chanel sits on the famous steps of her couture house as contemporary models march past her, wearing her greatest designs.

### **THE ARTIST**

**Date and Time:** Wednesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

**Location:** Global Heritage Hall, GH01

**Director:** Michel Hazanavicius

**Screenplay:** Michel Hazanavicius

**Cast:** George Valentin: Jean Dujardin, Peppy Miller: Bérénice Bejo, Al Zimmer: John Goodman, Clifton: James Cromwell

**Running time:** 100' **Production:** Belgium, France, 2011 **Rating:** PG-13

**AWARDS:** Best Motion Picture; Best Director – Academy Awards (2012), Best Actor, Jean Dujardin – Cannes Film Festival (2011), Best Actress, Bérénice Bejo – César Awards (2012)

A delightful homage to silent-era Hollywood, Michel Hazanavicius's mostly silent film, opens in 1927, when preening matinee idol George Valentin, is still the top draw at Kinograph Studios. Ignoring the increasingly icy glares his wife aims at him across the breakfast table, George acts as a mentor to Peppy Miller, a chorus girl with big ambitions. The Artist tracks both Peppy's ascent (through amusing montage) and George's decline as he refuses to acknowledge synchronized-sound as more than a passing fad. By 1932, Peppy is attracting lines around the block for her latest, Beauty Spot, while George spends his afternoons passed out on a barroom floor, his Jack Russell terrier his sole remaining fan. Or so the fading star thinks: Peppy's never forgotten him, and the film's concluding act is one of the most buoyant in recent memory. The movie pivots on the spry connection between Dujardin and Bejo, both nimble performers and elegantly turned out in period finery and pomade. The Artist, which was shot at 22 frames per second and utilizes the boxy 1:33 aspect ratio, also expertly deploys many of the technical aspects of the silent period.

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#### **ABOUT ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY:**

Roger Williams University is ranked by U.S. News and World Report as eighth among comprehensive colleges in the north. Roger Williams offers undergraduate and graduate programs in the arts and sciences, architecture, business, construction management, education, engineering, historic preservation, justice studies, legal studies, visual arts studies and law. For more information, go to [www.rwu.edu](http://www.rwu.edu).

#### **ABOUT FLICKERS:**

The **FLICKERS: Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF)** has secured its place in the global community as the portal for the best in international independent cinema, earning the respect of domestic and foreign filmmakers, filmgoers and trend watchers. This confluence of art and commerce brought together world-class celebrities, award-winning filmmakers, new talent and audience members in record numbers last year. Ranked as one of the top-10 festivals in the United States, RIIFF is one of **19 festivals worldwide** that is a qualifying festival for the Academy Awards® in both short film and documentary short film through its partnership with the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences®

For more information about the **FLICKERS: Rhode Island International Film Festival**, running **Aug. 5-10, 2014** at The Vets (formerly Veterans Memorial Auditorium), please visit [www.RIFilmFest.org](http://www.RIFilmFest.org) or call **401.861.4445**.

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