

# THE TOURNÉES FESTIVAL

New French Films on Campus

## SIXTH ANNUAL RWU TOURNEES FILM FESTIVAL SCREENING SCHEDULE APRIL 2-7, 2018



**04/02/18** at 6:00 p.m.

**CAS 157**

**ELLE** | Paul Verhoeven, Director | 130 min. France, Germany, 2016

The first French film by Paul Verhoeven, the Dutch provocateur behind such sneakily subversive Hollywood fare as *Robocop* and *Basic Instinct*, *Elle* is a work of startling moral complexity, a constantly surprising narrative that provides an in-depth, occasionally uncomfortable portrait of a well-do-do Paris woman with more than a few secrets. The film

begins when Michèle Leblanc, the co-owner of a successful video game company, is sexually assaulted by a masked man in her own home. Through Michèle's unusual response to her assault and eventual discovery of the culprit, the viewer learns about her past and comes to understand what has shaped her blunt, sometimes shocking personality. *Elle* explores the dark, mystifying sides of the psyche, but with a light touch and fast pace that allow Verhoeven to make the most of his characters' comic foibles. One only has to compare *Elle*'s bumbling men to its powerful heroine to realize that this is a feminist film, one that furthers the discussion on rape and trauma, but, most importantly, portrays women in positions of strength. Nominated for a 2017 Academy Award for her work in *Elle*, Isabelle Huppert delivers another brave, illuminating performance. As Verhoeven has stated in interviews, one always sees what Michèle is thinking in Huppert's eyes. In a film that plumbs the depths of human complexity, this access to the intricacies of the mind is nothing short of riveting.



**04/03/18** at 6:00 p.m.

**CAS 157**

**FRANTZ** | François Ozon, Director | 113 min. France, Germany, 2016

Shortly after World War I, in a provincial German town conspicuously devoid of its young men, Anna discovers a stranger at the grave of her late fiancé Frantz, one of the thousands of young Germans killed in the war. The stranger soon introduces himself to Anna and Frantz's parents as Adrien, a French friend of the dead soldier. Growing fond of Adrien, Anna begins to come out of mourning for Frantz and once again embraces her

future. Then Adrien makes a terrible confession and disappears, forcing Anna to go searching for him in Paris. With this stirring adaptation of Ernst Lubitsch's classic melodrama *Broken Lullaby*, François Ozon, a master of cinematic dissemblance, delivers a sumptuous period piece that asks whether a lie can ever be healthier than the truth. Coming at a time when the European Union appears at its most vulnerable, *Frantz* is also a meditation on Europe: Anna's journey to France mirrors Adrien's to Germany, bridging the bloody differences between the two nations in 1919 to show how much they have in common—as well as the nagging strains of nationalism and xenophobia. But this lush romance filmed in black and white and color is above all a profoundly unusual and effective pacifist film, which—aside from one

brief but devastating flashback—takes place entirely after the war, surveying the human damage both on the winning and the losing sides.



**04/04/18** at 6:00 p.m.

**CAS 157**

**LA BELLE ET LA BÊTE (BEAUTY AND THE BEAST)** | Jean Cocteau, Director | 93 min. France, 1946

When the beautiful Belle volunteers to take her ruined father's place as the prisoner of a mysterious Beast who lives in a castle on the other side of the forest, an unexpected romance blossoms between the reclusive monster and the innocent maiden. Soon the question

arises whether the real monster is the Beast or Belle's avaricious siblings...especially since the Beast is actually a cursed Prince (played by the uncannily handsome Jean Marais). A defining influence on filmmakers as different as Ingmar Bergman and François Truffaut, this adaptation of the classic fairy tale by iconoclastic novelist, playwright, artist, and filmmaker Jean Cocteau is that rare film that truly deserves to be called "magical," a deeply ambiguous yet supremely romantic work that turns cinema into a spectacular conjurer's trick, full of magic mirrors and golden keys, misty woods and ominous palaces. Shot in atmospheric black and white by the great cinematographer Henri Alekan, *Beauty and the Beast* is rightly considered one of the absolute masterpieces of French cinema, a film fantasy that Cocteau said was "for grown-ups who haven't lost their childhood" ...or for children ready to marvel at the best that cinema can offer.



**04/05/18** at 6:00 p.m.

**CAS 157**

**MARGUERITE** | Xavier Giannoli, Director | 129 min. Belgium, Czech Republic, France, 2016

Marguerite Dumont is an incredibly wealthy woman who has devoted her life to singing opera. There's only one problem and it's a problem no one will dare to mention to her, starting with her husband: she cannot sing in tune to save her life. From this brilliant premise based on the true story of Florence Foster Jenkins, the American socialite and calamitous singer who inspired

the recent Meryl Streep film (and a character in *Citizen Kane*), writer-director Xavier Giannoli draws a marvelously rich tale, mining the comic possibilities as well as the genuine tragedy of a woman living in a world of illusion sustained by sycophants. Giannoli also creates a striking portrait of Paris in the twenties, taking in the aristocratic milieu as well as the ferment of subversive art movements and the Bohemian demimonde. *Marguerite* is a tour de force of controlled chaos, brimming with eccentric characters and opulent set pieces, all orbiting around the irresistible figure of Marguerite, a woman whose dedication is an inspiration—until it turns to madness and cautionary tale. For her unforgettable performance in *Marguerite*, Catherine Fort was awarded the 2015 César (French Oscar) for best actress in a leading role.



**04/06/17** at 6:00 p.m.

**CAS 157**

**QUAND ON A 17 ANS (BEING 17)** | André Téchiné, Director | 116 min. France, 2016

With *Being 17*, the great French writer-director André Téchiné returns to the subject matter of his masterpiece *Wild Reeds*, a 1994 feature about the sexual awakening of a handful of teenagers in the

rural southwest of France during the Algerian war, and a landmark in the representation of gay youth in French cinema. In this new film, the time is the present and the setting the majestic landscape of the Pyrenees. Seventeen-year-old Damien lives alone with his mother, a doctor, while his father is deployed overseas with the French army. At school, he is a good student but an outsider. He is frequently bullied by Thomas, a biracial boy who must commute several hours a day from his adoptive family's remote farm high in the mountains. When Damien's mother meets Thomas through an emergency house-call to his mother, she discovers the hardships the boy must face to go to school and eventually invites him to move in with her family to be close to the classroom. The relationship between Damien and Thomas only gets worse and the two boys soon come to blows. Yet as both their families face major upheavals, Damien realizes he is in love with Thomas. With *Being 17*, Téchiné has made his best film in years, returning to his winning mix of subtly observed naturalism and narrative developments worthy of the great melodramas to give us another memorable depiction of the trials and triumphs of coming of age and coming out.



**04/07/18** at 2:00 p.m.

**CAS 157**

**FRANCOPHONE FILM FESTIVAL**

**New and Classic French Short Films**

A memorable collection of award-winning short films celebrating the Francophone experience across the globe. The program is curated from the archives of the Academy Award qualifying, Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival.



**04/07/18** at 4:00 p.m.

**CAS 157**

**MA VIE DE COURGETTE (MY LIFE AS A ZUCCHINI) |**

Claude Barras, Director | 68 min. France, Switzerland, 2016

Though bravely realistic, Swiss director Claude Barras's charming stopmotion animated film is an unexpectedly uplifting look at childhood tragedy. After his alcoholic mother's death, nine-year-old Icare—known to his friends as Zucchini—is placed in a group home where he soon forms alliances and rivalries with a group of kids in equally difficult circumstances, including the son of drug addicts and

the daughter of a deported refugee. But it takes the arrival of the recently orphaned Camille for Zucchini to know he has found a friend for life. Which means that when Camille's nasty aunt appears to take her away, the kids band together to find a way to keep her at the home. Though Barras and screenwriter Céline Sciamma (a powerhouse of contemporary French cinema as the writer/director of international hit *Girlhood*) never pull punches in describing the challenges faced by their characters, *My Life as a Zucchini* is imbued with a real-life sense of childhood wonder, both through its inventive animation and its commitment to exclusively telling the story from the children's perspective. The result is a marvelously nuanced, finely crafted depiction of childhood, as appealing to young people as adults. Following a triumphant premiere at the Director's Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival,

*My Life as a Zucchini* wooed general audiences in France with its idiosyncratic style and bold treatment of its subject. It has since been nominated for a 2017 Academy Award for Best Animated Feature.