

TIFF PRESENTS

# HIGHER LEARNING

Cannes Critics Week panel  
Films screened during TIFF Cinematheque's Fifty Years of Discovery:  
Cannes Critics Week (Jan. 18-22, 2012)

In honour of the fiftieth anniversary of Semaine de la Critique (Cannes Critics Week), TIFF Cinematheque invited eight local and international critics and opinion-makers to each select and introduce a film that was discovered at the festival. The diversity of their selections—everything from revered art-house classics to scrappy American indies, cutting-edge cult hits and intriguingly unknown efforts by famous names—testifies to the festival's remarkable breadth and eclecticism, and its key role in discovering new generations of filmmaking talent. Programmed by Brad Deane, Manager of Film Programmes.

**Clerks.** Dir. Kevin Smith, 1994, U.S. 92 mins. Production Co.: View Askew Productions / Miramax Films.

Introduced by George Stroumboulopoulos, host of CBC's *Stroumboulopoulos Tonight*, formerly known as *The Hour*. Stroumboulopoulos on *Clerks*:

"When Kevin Smith made *Clerks* and it got on the big screen, you felt like our voice was winning."

**Living Together (Vive ensemble).** Dir. Anna Karina, 1973, France. 92 mins. Production Co.: Raska Productions / Société Nouvelle de Cinématographie (SNC).

Introduced by author and former critic for the *Chicago Reader*, Jonthan Rosenblum. Rosenblum on *Living Together*:

"I saw *Living Together* when it was first screened at Cannes in 1973, and will never forget the brutality with which this gently first feature was received. One prominent English critic, the late Alexander Walker, asked Anna Karina after the screening whether she realized that her first film was only being shown because she was once married to a famous film director; she sweetly asked in return whether she should have therefore rejected the Critics Week's invitation. Everyday observation, lack of pretension, and a woman's viewpoint were all especially rare qualities in art movies of this period, and almost four decades later, I can still recall how gracefully this love story handles its Paris and New York locations."

**Loving Memory.** Dir. Tony Scott, 1969, U.K. 52 mins. Production Co.: British Film Institute (BFI)/ Memorial Enterprises.

Introduced by chief film critic for the *National Post*, Chris Knight. Knight on *Loving Memory*:

"Tony Scott has never exactly been known for his sense of nuance and subtlety, but before such blockbusters as *Top Gun*, *Days of Thunder*, *Crimson Tide*, *Man on Fire* and *Unstoppable*, he wrote and directed this hour-long black-and-white film set in rural Yorkshire. What does young Tony's first feature reveal of the adrenaline-junkie filmmaker to come?"

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***Man Bites Dog (C'est arrivé près de chez vous)***. Dirs. Rémy Belvaux, André Bonzel, and Benoît Poelvoorde, 1992, Belgium. 95 mins. Production Co.: Les Artistes Anonymes.

Introduced by NOW Magazine's Norm Wilner, Toronto film critic. Wilner on *Man Bites Dog*:

"Twenty Years on, *Man Bites Dog* has lost none of its teeth: it's second only to Albert Brooks' brilliant *Real Life* in its prophetic satire of the ethical blindness of our media culture. It's hysterically funny, but when it reveals its ingenious endgame – indicting the real audience along with the fictional characters – the laughter dies in the throat."

***Santa Claus Has Blue Eyes (Le père Noël a les yeux bleus)***. Dir. Jean Eustache, 1969, France. 50 mins. Production Co.: Anouchka Films.

And

***Virgin of Pessac, The (Rosière de Pessac, La)***. Dir. Jean Eustache, 1968, France. 55 mins. Production Co.: Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française (ORTF).

Introduced by French film critic and member of Cannes Critics Week's selection committee, Fabian Gaffez. Gaffez is also the director of the Amiens Film Festival and regularly appears in *Positif*. Gaffez on Jean Eustache:

"The work of Jean Eustache, dark heir of the *nouvelle vague*, is one of the greatest La Semaine de la Critique [Cannes Critics Week] has ever discovered. Eustache would film with his heart, whether it was a fiction with autobiographical hints (*Santa Claus Has Blue Eyes*) or a documentary set in the landscape of his childhood (*The Virgin of Pessac*). Talking about his films is talking about the origin of cinema: giving the world and its inhabitants a voice, and an image."

***Spirit of the Beehive, The (El espíritu de la colmena)***. Dir. Victor Erice, 1973, Spain. 97 mins. Elías Querejeta Producciones Cinematográficas S.L./Jacel Desposito.

Introduced by critic for the *Toronto Star*, Peter Howell. Howell on *The Spirit of the Beehive*:

"*The Spirit of the Beehive* transcends language in its virtuoso weaving of the Frankenstein myth, family tensions and the harsh realities of Franco's fascist Spain. Victor Erice has a painter's eye and a poet's soul."

***Walkover***. Dir. Jerzy Skolimowski, 1965, Poland. 77 mins. Production Co.: Zespół Filmowy "Syrena".

Introduced by Liam Lacey, film critic for *The Globe and Mail*. Lacey on *Walkover*.

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"Roman Polanski's contemporary and collaborator on the screenplay for *Knife in the Water*, Jerzy Skolimowski was a jazz-loving boxer, writer and actor. In his 1965 second feature, he stars as Andrzej Leszczyc, a cynical non-conformist, itinerant boxing hustler and poet, who soliloquizes in voiceover: 'with my hand on my neck, I want to fix everything [...] but only fix my tie.' Taking its title from a mismatch, or uncontested flight, *Walkover* is famous for a dazzling one-take sequence, where an opponent on a motorcycle convinces Andrzej to jump off a train to return for a fight."

***Orphanage, The (Orphanato, El)***. Dir. Juan Antonio Bayona, 2007, Spain/Mexico. 105 mins. Production Co.: Esta Vivo! Laboratorio de Nuevos Talentos/Grupo Rodar/Rodar y Rodar Cine y Televisión/Telecinco Cinema/Televisió de Catalunya (TV3)/Warner Bros. Pictures de España/Wild Bunch.

Introduced by Liz Braun, longtime film critic for the *Toronto Sun*. Braun on *The Orphanage*:

"A visually stunning horror film and an auspicious directorial debut for Juan Antonio Bayona, *The Orphanage* engages the imagination in a terrifying fashion. No cheap thrills or manipulative shock tactics: what we have here is a scary story for grown-ups."