

20 SEPT - 7 OCT 2009

NEIGHBOURS

CINE LUMIERE & RIO CINEMA

A CUTTING-EDGE PROGRAMME OF FRENCH FILMS EXPLORING THE INTERTWINED RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN CONTEMPORARY ART, CINEMA AND THE DOCUMENTARY

Neighbours, curated by Pascale Cassagnau, is a cutting edge programme of French films exploring the intertwined relationships between contemporary art, cinema and documentary. The programme brings together renowned and emerging artists working on the borders of these various art forms.

Having achieved recognition for his acting, triple César award winner Mathieu Amalric (The Diving Bell and the Butterfly, Quantum of Solace) presents his directorial project Le Stade de Wimbledon, (Wimbledon Stadium) 2001, which tells the story of a young woman researching a writer who died before ever having a work published. Another actor familiar to French cinema-goers, Melvil Poupaud (Time to Leave, A Summer Tale), presents three short films from a collection made over a period of nearly 20 years which together become a biography of the actor over time. Celebrated director Bertrand Bonello's (Tiresia, The Pornographer) films have been presented several times at the Cannes Film Festival. As part of Neighbours he presents De la guerre, 'On War' 2008, and Cindy, The Doll is Mine, 2005, inspired by a photograph by Cindy Sherman. These three screenings will be followed by a Q&As with their respective directors.

Double Blind (No Sex Last Night) a rarely screened film by Sophie Calle will be presented at the Ciné Lumière, just before the opening of her major exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery on 16th October. The film tells the story,

through intimate diary entries, of the journey undertaken by Calle and Greg Shepard across the United States, in a convertible Cadillac to Las Vegas to clinch their marriage at a 'drive-in wedding window'.

Presented by the French Institute in London in collaboration with the South London Gallery, Neighbours explores the links and overlaps between contemporary art, cinema and the documentary form, through a body of work that demonstrates the diversity and richness of French film-making.

Within the broad domain of art, the mutual relationships between cinema and visual art have occupied a special place throughout the history of 20th century aesthetics. These media have interpreted the era's images and mass media, as well as provided a thorough critique of the definition of representation itself. Certain contemporary works in the fields of 'video' and the 'moving image' make explicit references to cinema, using a variety of methods and indicating a range of shared hypotheses concerning representation. While the dialogue between the two interlinked art forms has so far been manifest more in the interest art pays to cinema, it also takes in cinema's turn towards contemporary art, with the invention of unidentified filmic objects. Script, narrative framework, fictionalisation of the self, sources of images and set design are all key elements, repeatedly revisited as much by contemporary cineastes as by visual artists.

Sun 20 Sept, 2.30 pm

Mathieu Amalric, Le Stade de Wimbledon,
(Wimbledon Stadium) 2001, 70' and
Malus, Un film post-scriptum, sur le Stade
de Wimbledon, (Malus: a postscript in film,
on Wimbledon Stadium) 2006, 18'
£8, conc. £6

Le Stade de Wimbledon, adapted from Daniele Del Giudice's eponymous novel, portrays a young woman who is researching a writer, who passed away without ever having a work published. Through her investigations, which lead her from Trieste to London, she makes acquaintances with those close to the deceased. Mathieu Amalric is a triple César award winning actor and film director. He has acted in films by directors including Arnaud Desplechin, Arnaud et Jean-Marie Larrieu, Steven Spielberg, Benoît Jacquot and Olivier Assayas. In 2007, he starred in the film *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, in which he plays a man paralysed by a serious stroke. He more recently appeared on British screens as Dominic Greene, the villain in the Bond film *Quantum of Solace*.
Followed by a Q&A with director Mathieu Amalric

Sun 27 Sept, 1.30 pm

Bertrand Bonello, De la guerre, (On War) 2008, 130'
and Cindy, The Doll is Mine, 2005, 15'
£8, conc. £6

De la guerre is concerned with the utopia that every community represents. Inspired by Georges Bataille's writings on giving and economy but also by Carl von Clausewitz's war strategies, the film forms a subtle but complex tapestry, shot through with images of art and dance. The actors' roles verge on performance; the account is continually decentred to permit the incursion of elements of fantasy. The film reflects Bertrand Bonello's personal artistic outlook, represented through figures of doubling, of metamorphosis and ellipsis.

Cindy, The Doll is Mine - or the story of the brunette who takes a photograph of a blonde - also forms part of this cinema of ambiguity and doubling, as the two characters are played by the same actress, Asia Argento. The filmmaker was inspired by one of American artist Cindy Sherman's photographs: Untitled n°67, 1980.

The film is a documentary on Asia Argento at work, a cinematic lesson on the construction of a shot, a meditation on copying and the model in photography. What is more, the film follows Sherman's method closely. Reflecting the manner of Sherman's 'portraits', Bertrand Bonello's film directs our attention towards the constant exchange established between the two characters and so between two poles of fiction.

Followed by a Q&A with director Bertrand Bonello

Thur 24 Sept, 7.30 pm

Melvil Poupaud, 3 shorts, Qui es-tu Johnny Mac?,
3 jours and Rémi, 1984-2003, 45'
Jean André Fieschi and **Françoise Etchegaray**,
La Fabrique du Conte d'été
(The Making of A Summer's Tale), 2005, 90'
£7, conc. £5

Melvil Poupaud was born in 1973 and appeared in his first film aged 10, under the direction of Raoul Ruiz with whom he has made a dozen features. Since then he has acted in more than 30 films by directors such as Eric Rohmer, Benoît Jacquot, Arnaud Desplechin, François Ozon, and James Ivory. Poupaud first bought himself a video camera twenty years ago and began shooting short films in his bedroom. Since then, he has continued to make fiction films inspired by his professional and personal experiences.

Melvil Poupaud's short films were made secretly during the shooting of feature films in which he was acting - principally with Raoul Ruiz and Eric Rohmer. These 'little' films were put together on the sly, after or alongside the main film, in the context of a feigned professionalism - so one in the eye for the directors under whom Poupaud was working at the time. Over the years, the series of films builds into a kind of biography, allowing us to interpret the evolution of their subject - a young actor - in real time.

In La Fabrique du Conte d'été, Jean-André Fieschi and Françoise Etchegaray immerse themselves in Eric Rohmer's work as director, bringing their camera's eye as close as possible to the faces and bodies filmed by Rohmer, focusing on the actor Melvil Poupaud in particular. Put together from the rushes filmed by Françoise Etchegaray and those of Rohmer's film *Conte d'été*, La Fabrique du Conte d'été is a montage that fosters a mise en abyme aesthetic, with multiple parallel points of view.

Followed by a Q&A with director Melvil Poupaud

Tues 29 Sept, 6.30 pm

Clarisse Hahn, Les Protestants,
(The Protestants) 2005, 90'
£5, conc. £3

Clarisse Hahn's work is built mainly on documentary research, developed through films, photographs and video installations. The artist establishes a close relationship with the subjects she films, working with them for long periods. For Hahn, a discreet and patient gaze that takes in places and people allows filmic space to merge with that of reports like those more commonly used to present cultural and religious communities. The 'Protestants' filmed here - her family - make up anthropological motifs, a documentary corpus in the making. The narrative is made up of a series of unusual stories in which each person questioned cites his/her account at a point somewhere between subjective reporting and collective statement.

Sat 3 Oct, 4pm

Valérie Mréjen, Pork and milk, 2006, 52'
and Portraits filmés, (Portraits in film) 2002, 13,30'
Olivier Zabat, 1/3 des yeux, (1/3 on Eyes) 2005, 70'
£5, conc. £3

Valérie Mréjen's work is about language itself, accomplished through research that leads her to the borders and border-crossings of writing, cinema, artists' books and video.

In Pork and Milk, Mréjen creates a series of portraits of Israeli apostates: successive portraits of Jewish Israelis who have renounced their religion and left their orthodox families. The portraits document rare moments of silenced people speaking out, so confirming the dialogic nature of cinema as art. Film becomes an exhibition space in which even the workings of language can be displayed, where the individual may courageously confront the community of believers.

Portraits filmés are memories on film: short pieces, each no longer than a minute, in which mini-scenes of memories unfold through the exchange of a few words. In Portraits filmés, each person filmed becomes a character in his/her own personal fiction, spinning stories which are not to be taken too seriously and playing with their choice of words; somewhere between oration and storytelling.

Olivier Zabat's films occupy the grey area between fiction and documentary. They are a combination of documentary and artistic approaches, balancing his investigation between facts and visual experience, using the dialogue form that underpins all acts of testimony. 1/3 des yeux constructs an open, non-directive account of four true stories of trauma.

They are conceived as four modules, each rebuilding images of situations, tales of danger and injury. The film's open, indeterminate form offers the viewer a space to read, decode and form his/her own expectations, thus revealing the suppressed layers of meaning that inform our reality.

Wed 7 Oct, 8.30 pm

Sophie Calle, Double Blind
(No Sex Last Night), 1992, 76'
£5, conc. £3

Double Blind (No Sex last night) is the tale, told through intimate diary entries, of the journey undertaken by Sophie Calle and Greg Shepard from the east to the west coast of the United States, in a convertible Cadillac intended to take them to Las Vegas to clinch their marriage at a 'drive-in wedding window'. Both protagonists bring their camera with them and film their journey. The viewer is presented with two selective views of the countryside and characters, in effect two versions of the same journey, supported by each artist's commentary. The soundtrack reconstitutes their 'live' dialogues, thus juxtaposing subjective feelings and impressions.

Note to the editors

Neighbours is curated by Pascale Cassagnau, art critic, Professor of History of Art and Director of the Fund for Audiovisuals and New Media at the Centre National des Arts Plastiques in France. She is the author of works on Chris Burden, James Coleman, John Baldessari, Pierre Huyghe, Dominique Gonzalez Foerster and Matthieu Laurette, among others. Her current research focuses on new practices in cinematography and on their connections with the other creative arts.

Press information

Institut français (for Ciné Lumière programme)

Natacha Antolini

natacha.antolini@ambafrance.org.uk

020 7073 1365

Naomi Crowther

naomi.crowther@ambafrance.org.uk

020 7073 1333

South London Gallery (for Rio Cinema programme)

Sangeeta Sathe

sangeeta@southlondongallery.org

020 7703 6120

Tamarisk Saunders-Davies

tamarisk@southlondongallery.org

020 7703 6120

Venues/Booking information

Ciné Lumière at the Institut français

17 Queensberry Place

London SW7 2DT

020 7073 1350

www.institut-francais.org.uk

Rio Cinema

107 Kingsland High Street

London E8 2PB

020 7251 9410

www.riocinema.ndirect.co.uk