

HIRSCHEFIELD

INTERNATIONAL FILM-VIDEO SERIES 2009-2010

All programs are presented twice on Saturdays, at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m., and held in Middlebury College's Dana Auditorium on College Street. Admission is Free. Films are projected in 35mm unless otherwise noted. Some of the works in this series may be inappropriate for children; we regret that we are unable to preview the material.

Sept 19



Happy-Go-Lucky [UK, 2008, 118']

Poppy (Sally Hawkins) is an exuberant, 30-year-old elementary school teacher in London, whose persistent carefree optimism grinds on her serious driving instructor Scott (Eddie Marsan). This slice-of-life film follows Poppy as she takes flamenco dance lessons and sorts out the aggressive behavior of one of her students. Written and directed by Mike Leigh, the acclaimed creator of *Secrets & Lies* (1996). "There are countless ways [Hawkins] could have stepped wrong but

she breezes in on her bicycle and engages our deepest sympathy"—Roger Ebert, *Chicago Sun-Times*. "Mr. Leigh has executed a richly exuberant entertainment for our troubled times"—Andrew Sarris, *The New York Observer*. Hawkins won a Golden Globe for her performance in the film and Leigh was honored by a number of critics' groups for his writing and direction.

Sept 26



Man on Wire [UK/USA, 2008, 94']

In August 1974, French performer Philippe Petit strung a wire between the two World Trade Center Towers in New York City and balanced on it for nearly an hour. Director James Marsh uses archival footage, contemporary interviews, and recreations to explore Petit's career, detail the clandestine logistics of setting up the Trade Center wire, and reflect upon the profound effects of the walk's success upon Petit

and those close to him. "A thorough, understated and altogether enthralling documentary"—A.O. Scott, *The New York Times*. "Perfectly poised between artistry and audacity. It's beautiful"—Michael Phillips, *The Chicago Tribune*. Winner of an Academy Award and an Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary. French with English subtitles.

Oct 3



I've Loved You So Long [France/Germany, 2008, 117']

Lea (Elsa Zylberstein) invites her estranged sister Juliette (Kristin Scott Thomas) to move in with her when she is released from prison. The new arrangement is difficult at first as Juliette readjusts to normal life after 15 years behind bars, but she gradually opens up to the world again. Written and directed by Philippe Claudel, writer of *At My Fingertips* (2002). "One of Kristin Scott Thomas' most inspired perfor-

mances"—Roger Ebert, *The Chicago Sun Times*. "The film deftly sketches a sibling relationship complicated by obligation, guilt, mistrust, and, not least, an abiding love"—Scott Tobias, *The Onion A.V. Club*. Winner of a Jury Prize at the Berlin International Film Festival and a BAFTA Award for best foreign language film. French with English subtitles. Sponsored by the French Department.

Oct 17



Synecdoche, New York [USA, 2008, 124']

Worried about the transience of his rapidly unraveling life, Caden Cotard (Phillip Seymour Hoffman) leaves his home in Schenectady, New York and uses his MacArthur "Genius" Grant to create a theatrical replica of his life. Written and directed by Charlie Kaufman, the Oscar-winning writer of *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004). "No film

with an ambition this large, and achievement this impressive, can be anything but exhilarating, a vital affirmation of the creative process"—Richard Corliss, *Time*. Winner of Independent Spirit Awards for Best First Feature and Outstanding Ensemble Cast.

Oct 24



The Toe Tactic [USA, 2008, 83']

Director Emily Hubley will introduce the 8 p.m. screening and be present for discussion. In this hybrid of live-action and animation, Mona Peek learns her childhood home has been sold and finds herself overcome with grief for her dead father. Mona's emotional plight becomes the subject of a card game between four talking dogs who intervene with fate.

"The argument this movie makes—on behalf of eccentric, vulnerable characters and against more ordinary kinds of cinema—is for the supreme value of idiosyncrasy.—"A.O. Scott, *The New York Times*. Developed at the Sundance Labs, with John Sayles as Mona's landlord, and a score by Yo La Tengo.

Nov 7



Che: Part One [Spain/France/USA, 2008, 134']

In 1956, Ernesto "Che" Guevara (Benicio Del Toro) and a group of Cuban exiles led by Fidel Castro travel to Cuba from Mexico. Over the next two years they build support and mobilize an army to free Cuba from the corrupt dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Written by Peter Buchman, the

first half of Steven Soderbergh's epic directorial effort is also known as *The Argentine*. "Mr. Soderbergh once again offers a master class in filmmaking"—A.O. Scott, *The New York Times*.

Nov 12



"New Directions in Romantic Comedy"

William Paul, Professor of Performing Arts at Washington University in St. Louis, will speak on "New Directions in Romantic Comedy" on Thursday, November 12th at 4:30 p.m. in 232 Axinn Center. Professor Paul, a leading authority on romantic comedy and film genres, is the

author of *Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy and Laughing Screaming: Modern Hollywood Horror and Comedy*. Sponsored by the Film and Media Culture Department and the First Year Seminar Program.

Nov 14



Che: Part Two [Spain/France/USA, 131']

At the height of his fame and power, Che resigns from his government post in Cuba and disappears into the jungles of Bolivia. He recruits an army of guerilla fighters and sets out to spark revolutions throughout Latin America. Written by Benjamin A. van der Veen and Peter Buchman, Soderbergh's

second installment is also known as *Guerilla*. Spanish with English subtitles. "Che is Soderbergh's most interesting film in years, defiantly eccentric and absorbing"—Michael Phillips, *Chicago Tribune*. Spanish with English subtitles.

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Nov 21



Waltz With Bashir [Israel, 2008, 90']

Surprised and intrigued by his inability to remember his time in the Israeli Army during the first Lebanon war, director Ari Folman interviews friends and comrades around the world to discover the truth about that time of his life. Folman presents his story in stunning animation with the help of chief illustrator David Polonsky. "A memoir, a history lesson, a combat picture, a piece of investigative journalism and an altogether amazing film"—A.O. Scott, **The New York Times**.

"Provocative, hallucinatory, incendiary, this devastating animated documentary is unlike any Israeli film you've seen"—Kenneth Turan, **Los Angeles Times**. The first animated film to be nominated for a Best Foreign Language film Academy Award and winner of a Directors Guild of America award for achievement in documentary. Hebrew, German, and Arabic with English subtitles.

Dec 5



The Reader [USA/Germany, 2008, 124']

Just after World War II, German teenager Michael Berg (David Kross) has a secret love affair with an older woman named Hanna (Kate Winslet), which comes to an abrupt end when Hanna leaves without explanation. As a law student eight years later, he is shocked to see Hanna as a defendant in a Nazi war crime trial. Directed by Stephen Daldry, the Oscar-nominated director of **The Hours** (2002) and **Billy Elliot** (2000). "An immaculately crafted, splendidly

acted drama with a message at its core of forgiveness and humanity"—Marc Mohan, **Portland Oregonian**. "Kross and Winslet's intense performances and Daldry's deliberately placid control of tone make the material work as a love (and hate) story as well as a metaphor"—Tasha Robinson, **The Onion (A.V. Club)**. Winner of an Academy Award and Golden Globe for Best Actress, Kate Winslet. Sponsored by the Holocaust Remembrance Film Fund.

Feb 13



Wendy and Lucy [USA, 2008, 80']

Wendy (Michelle Williams), a young woman bound for Alaska with hopes for a lucrative fishing industry job, finds herself stranded in a dreary Oregon town when her car breaks down. Wendy's bad luck continues as her dog Lucy, her only companion, goes missing and she faces an increasingly dire financial situation. Directed by Kelly Reichardt, the

acclaimed director of **Old Joy** (2006). "Another illustration of how absorbing a film can be when the plot doesn't stand between us and a character"—Roger Ebert, **Chicago Sun-Times**. Winner of Toronto Film Critics Association Awards for best feature and best female performance, Michelle Williams.

Feb 20



The Class [France, 2008, 128']

Francois (Francois Marin) and the other teachers at a tough, inner-city high school try to remain upbeat while coping with unruly and disinterested students. Despite Francois' best intentions, the challenging students eventually bring him to a breaking point. The film presents the classroom in a direct style that frequently lets events play out in real time. Directed by Laurent Cantet, the acclaimed writer and director of **Human Resources** (1999). "One of the screen's

most rewarding explorations of the teacher/student relationship in any language"—Michael Phillips, **The Chicago Tribune**. "The movie is bursting with life, energy, fears, frustrations and the quick laughter of a classroom hungry for relief"—Roger Ebert, **The Chicago Sun-Times**. Winner of the Palm D'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. French with English Subtitles. Sponsored by the French Department.

Feb 27



Gomorrhah [Italy, 2008, 137']

Based on the bestselling book by journalist Roberto Saviano, this film offers a look at modern Naples and the Camorra crime syndicate that runs the city. Five interwoven stories of involvement with the criminal organization show the extent to which the Camorra has infiltrated everyday life in Italy and become a substantial force in the European economy. Directed by Mateo Garrone. "A frightening portrait of corruption, cynicism, intimidation, greed and violence"—Steven

Rea, **The Philadelphia Inquirer**. "It's brilliant filmmaking, a wake up call that means to shake you, and does"—Peter Travers, **Rolling Stone**. Winner of the Grand Prize of the Festival at Cannes and European film Awards for Best Film, Best Screenwriting, Best Director, Best Actor (Toni Servillo), and best Cinematography. Italian, Mandarin, and French with English subtitles.

Mar 6



Trouble the Water [USA, 2008, 93']

Directors Tia Lessin and Carl Deal craft a documentary around the home video footage of New Orleans musician Kimberly Rivers Roberts and her husband Scott. With these chilling images from before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina, Lessin and Deal provide an alternate account of the storm that stands in stark contrast to popular media coverage,

depicting the disaster of government and journalistic neglect of the underclass. "Ineradicably moving"—David Edelstein, **New York Magazine**. "A keenly dramatic look at how this country treats the poor and dispossessed"—Kenneth Turan, **The Los Angeles Times**. Winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival. Presented on DVD.

Mar 13



Let the Right One In [Sweden, 2008, 115']

Oskar is a timid 12-year-old boy, a frequent victim of bullying who longs for a friend. When a girl his age moves in next door and the two quickly bond, his wish seems to come true, but Eli is a strange and serious girl and her arrival coincides with a series of mysterious disappearances and murders. Their relationship is strained when Oskar realizes Eli is a vampire. Directed by Tomas Alfredson. "A coolly balanced and utterly compelling examination of alienation and

love"—Elena Oumano, **The Village Voice**. "A sweetly queasy film that suggests the spirit that sustains us, the demons we hide from the world, and the monsters that prey upon us in the dark might all be variations on the same beast"—Maria Schneider, **The Onion A.V. Club**. Winner of the Chicago Film Critics Association award for best foreign language film. Swedish with English subtitles.

April 3



The Edge of Heaven [Germany/Turkey/Italy, 2007, 122']

Nejat, a young professor, becomes fascinated with his father's live-in girlfriend, Yeter, and her daughter Ayten who is away at a university. When Yeter dies, Nejat travels to Istanbul looking for Ayten, but her political activism has forced her to flee to Germany, where she befriends a young woman named Lotte. The interconnected stories of these characters from three families explore the often tumultuous intersection of German and Turkish culture. Written and

directed by Fatih Akin, the actor and award-winning director of **Head-On** (2004). "Powerfully unsettled, it comes together by not coming together"—David Edelstein, **New York Magazine**. "A film roiling with cruelty but guided by tough political optimism"—Wesley Morris, **The Boston Globe**. Best Screenplay winner at the Cannes International Film Festival. German and Turkish with English subtitles. Presented on DVD.

April 10



RiP: A Remix Manifesto [Canada, 2009, 80']

Director Brett Gaylor explores the modern media landscape and the tension between copyright laws and remix culture in this collaborative documentary, available online for free for viewers to remix. The film focuses on Girl Talk, a popular mash-up musician, and includes input from Creative Commons founder Lawrence Lessig, Brazilian Minister of Culture Gilberto Gil, and pop-culture critic Cory Doctorow.

"A true work of art that relies on the remix technique at the center of its discussion. The fluidity of Gaylor's argument emerges from the competence of the movie's design"—Eric Kohn, **IndieWire**. "A forceful, vibrant and immensely entertaining call to action"—Kamal Al-Solaylee, **The Globe and Mail**. Presented on DVD.

April 17



Departures [Japan, 2008, 130']

Diago Kobayashi (Masahiro Motoki) is a cellist without an orchestra that moves back to his hometown with his wife to start over. Eager for work, Diago unknowingly applies to work for an undertaker. While his wife and acquaintances disapprove of the work, Diago begins to like it as he discovers the wonder, joy, and meaning of life through his connection to death. Directed by Yojiro Takita. "Eccentric,

movingly funny, and lushly scored black comedy"—Emanuel Levy, **Cinema 24/7**. "Kundo Koyama's first big-screen script peppers the proceedings with rich character detail and near screwball interludes that shouldn't fit but somehow do, owing to Motoki's appeal"—Eddie Cockrell, **Variety**. Winner of an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Japanese with English subtitles.

April 24



Frozen River [USA, 2008, 97']

Ray Eddy (Melissa Leo) is an upstate New York "trailer mom" struggling to make ends meet after her husband takes off with their savings. After meeting a Mohawk girl who lives on a reservation that straddles the US-Canadian border, Ray reluctantly teams up with a smuggler named Lila and they make trips across the frozen St. Lawrence River with illegal Chinese and Pakistani immigrants in the trunk of Ray's

Dodge. Directed by Courtney Hunt. "It's tough and cold and gives an inside look at poverty in America"—Don Lewis, **Film Threat**. "Ms. Hunt's eye for detail has the precision of a short story writer's. She misses nothing"—Stephen Holden, **The New York Times**. Winner of a Gotham Award for best film and an Independent Spirit Award for best female lead, Melissa Leo.