



ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DIRECTORS working in contemporary Hollywood, Kathryn Bigelow (1951-) brings a unique auteurist vision to the mainstream, playing with traditionally male-centric genres and reveling in the spectacle of violence. A passionate painter in her teens, Bigelow moved to New York in her early 20s to study at the Whitney Museum of American Art where she discovered the potential of film, pointed to complete a master's degree at Columbia University. Since her first short, *The Set-Up* in 1978, she has directed ten features across the genres of the cool and buddy film, action, science fiction, horror and the war drama. Refuting labels that focus on her gender, Bigelow is more interested in a cinema of attractions and the aesthetic possibilities of genre films. With her visually thrilling style, kinetic action sequences and portrayal of complex protagonists struggling with internal conflicts, she operates within the Hollywood system without conforming to it. Unflinching and thought provoking, Bigelow's ideologically complex films push cinematic boundaries and question collective assumptions about gender and violence. This short season focuses on many of Bigelow's most aesthetically successful films, from her striking early features like *Under Dark* and her action films of the 90s, including the present and underrated *Strange Days*, to the celebrated biopical drama, *The Hurt Locker*, for which she became the first (and still is) woman to receive the Academy Award for Best Director.

MELBOURNE CINÉMATHEQUE

2019 SCREENINGS

SEPTEMBER 11-25

PRAGUE: A LONGITUDINAL DOCU-FANTASIA CO-PRESENTED WITH THE CZECH AND SLOVAK FILM FESTIVAL OF AUSTRALIA



WEDNESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER

6:30pm FROM SATURDAY TO SUNDAY
Quincy Hargrove (1953) 99 mins - Unclassified 15+

Two young female office workers hit the town on a Saturday night and find Prague's exuberant nightlife not to be without peril. Prior to the notoriety of 1933's *Ecstasy*, Machty's brilliant first talkie, scripted with leading avant-garde artists like the Czechoslovak avant-garde, it perhaps never more so than in the years since cinema emerged and artists took to the streets to document and re-imagine "the mother of cities" - another sobriquet - onscreen. This season spans the silent to the digital era and encompasses realism and surrealism, fiction and documentary, often in combination. It showcases a great city of attractions but one also of decadence, turbulence, absurdity and hopelessness, and opens with two features made during the first Czechoslovak Republic demonstrating the allure and danger of Prague by night and displaying the heart-breaking phallus-like motif that runs through the film.

8:15pm BATTALION
Pavel Průšek (1927) 78 mins - Unclassified 15+

Upon discovering his wife's infidelity, a lawyer becomes a fixture at "Battalion", a weekly bar in old Prague where he is embraced as a champion of society's outcasts. This late silent film, presented with an outstanding new score by Kyryl Malafay, is an early high-water mark for social-realist cinema, yet impressionistic in depicting its hero's decline. Preceded by *Aimee's Walk*, Alexander Hammit (1928) is Unclassified 15+.

Hammit's first film as director is an unromantic tribute about Prague and its film industry, and even more so, Deren's 1943 avant-garde classic, *Melancholia* of the National Film Archive in Prague.



WEDNESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

6:30pm PRAGUE: THE RESTLESS HEART OF EUROPE
Věra Chytilová (1964) 59 mins - Unclassified 15+

Made as an episode for a TV series about European cities for Italian broadcaster RAI, this hyper-stylised essay film ranks amongst the most adventurous works of 1933's *Ecstasy*. Machty's brilliant first talkie, scripted with leading avant-garde artists like the Czechoslovak avant-garde, it perhaps never more so than in the years since cinema emerged and artists took to the streets to document and re-imagine "the mother of cities" - another sobriquet - onscreen. This season spans the silent to the digital era and encompasses realism and surrealism, fiction and documentary, often in combination. It showcases a great city of attractions but one also of decadence, turbulence, absurdity and hopelessness, and opens with two features made during the first Czechoslovak Republic demonstrating the allure and danger of Prague by night and displaying the heart-breaking phallus-like motif that runs through the film.

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NOVEMBER 13-20

SHIFTING SHELTER: LANDSCAPE AND BELONGING IN THE FILMS OF IVAN SEN



6:30pm BEGARS OF LIFE
William A. Wellman (1928) 100 mins - Unclassified 15+

This gritty study of hobo life on the rails is based on the novel *So Long* by the same name by late-life vagabond Jim Tully. Brooks expert Thomas Gledits holds that while Wellman's "artfully photographed, morally dark tale of the down-and-out" gives future Oscar winner Wallace Bree top billing for "an especially vital performance," it is Brooks who "dominates the screen in what is arguably her best role in her American film." With its proletarian and feminist themes of sexual abuse and murder, the film presents a truly transgressive view of the US just before the Great Depression. Courtesy of The George Eastman Museum.

6:30pm TOOMEAH
Ivan Sen (2001) 106 mins - MA 15+

A raw and textured portrait of ten-year-old Daniel, a wannabe gangster living in Toomeah. Shot without a crew and using a cast of first-timers (except for Sen, his future director), the film is a deeply personal project for Sen who based the script on his own experiences and memories of visiting the remote Aboriginal community in the far north of inland NSW. A masterful balance of sharp social commentary addressing issues such as Aboriginal deaths in custody, long-term unemployment and substance abuse, underscored by a dark, irreverent sense of humour.

8:25pm INDIGENOUS LEGACIES: THE DOCUMENTARIES OF IVAN SEN
Ivan Sen (2008-2008) 105 mins - Unclassified 15+

This collection of shorts shows Sen's skills as a documentarian and mines his far-reaching empathy for the lives and histories of Indigenous Australia. *Embassy Days* (2008) is a two-part investigation of four activists involved in the establishing of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra in 1972. *Yellow Falls* (2008) chronicles the life of Tom E. Lewis, the actor who portrayed Jimmie Blacksmith in *Red Sails in the Sunset*. *Amur* (2006) traces the life of a woman born in the Kimberley with a debilitating bone disease, featuring archival material and narration by Deborah Mailman taken from the memoir by Connie Nunjala McDonald. When You Grow Up,

8:50pm THE HOUSE OF MIRTH
Terence Davies (2000) 135 mins - PG

Gillian Anderson stars as Lily Bart, a fin de siècle New York upper-class woman who finds herself gradually outcast from her family as she falls on hard times. Davies' understated and meticulous approach to composition renders Edith Wharton's tragicomic story a series of stark, unflinching tableaux evoking early cinema and the work of Carl Dreyer. The protagonist's social degradation is later framed against exquisitely restrained period sets, bluntly emphasising the class and classism of the novel. Davies' explorations of women by cherished authors (Terence Davies and *The House of Mirth*). It concludes with his widely acclaimed account of the difficult but singular life of Emily Dickinson, *A Quiet Passion*.

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COMING TO AMERICA: ERNST LUBITSCH IN HOLLYWOOD



WEDNESDAY 10 JULY
6:30pm THE HURT LOCKER
Kathryn Bigelow (2008) 131 mins - MA 15+

Bigelow became the first woman to receive the Academy Award for Best Director for this palpably paranoid and austere biopic of the Iraq War, starring Jeremy Renner as the cavalier leader of a team of military bomb-disposal experts. Shot in Jordan just miles from the Iraq border, and featuring a series of breathtakingly tense set pieces, this immediate and open-spaced film - shot handheld on Super 16 by Barry Ackroyd - gives viewers a boots-on-the-ground perspective on the physical and psychological toll wrought by a futile war. With Guy Pearce and Ralph Fiennes, 35mm print courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia.

8:15pm STRANGE DAYS
Kathryn Bigelow (1999) 145 mins - R 18+

Bigelow's once maligned big-budget box-office failure, a heightened science-fiction thriller about a near-future, futuristic world of virtual reality and urban malaise, is now widely regarded as a fascinating, troubling and present film based on a script by James Cameron and Scott MacKenzie, starring Ice Cube, Cuba Gooding Jr., Laurence Fishburne, and Laurence Fishburne. A teaming, millennial, baroque and richly detailed vision of a decaying Los Angeles turned smart by race and crime, Bigelow's discomfiting neo-noir is a "visionary triumph" (Todd McCarthy) starring Ice Cube, Cuba Gooding Jr., Laurence Fishburne, and Laurence Fishburne. A teaming, millennial, baroque and richly detailed vision of a decaying Los Angeles turned smart by race and crime, Bigelow's discomfiting neo-noir is a "visionary triumph" (Todd McCarthy) starring Ice Cube, Cuba Gooding Jr., Laurence Fishburne, and Laurence Fishburne. 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