

# MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## MOVING IMAGE INTRODUCES 'FIRST LOOK' INTERNATIONAL SHOWCASE, WITH 13 NEW FEATURE FILMS, ALMOST ALL NEW YORK PREMIERES

**Chantal Akerman's *Almayer's Folly*, Christoph Hochhäusler's *The City Below*, Philippe Garrel's *This Summer*, Johnnie To's *Life Without Principle*, and Gonçalo Tocha's *It's the Earth Not the Moon* are among premieres**

**January 6–15, 2012**

To start the new year, Museum of the Moving Image introduces a brand new showcase for inventive, groundbreaking international cinema. **First Look** runs from January 6 through 15, 2012 and includes 13 features and 7 shorts: a highly selective group of films that are distinguished by their artistic audacity. Nearly all of the selections are New York premieres, and many are accompanied by personal appearances.

*First Look* is curated by Dennis Lim, editor of *Moving Image Source*, the Museum's multimedia magazine; Assistant Curator of Film Rachael Rakes; and Chief Curator David Schwartz. Essays on the films will be published on *Moving Image Source* (<http://movingimagesource.us>) in early January.

"Established and emerging directors featured in this series create new approaches to narrative, documentary, and experimental film, in many cases creating hybrid forms," said David Schwartz. "These films are adventures; they don't only bring us to new places, they offer new ways of seeing the world, and they redefine their medium."

"We wanted to create a program that makes a clear and coherent statement on what's important and exciting in world cinema today," said Dennis Lim. "Challenging, invigorating new work all too often gets marginalized because of the tough realities of art-film distribution and exhibition in the U.S. today. We believe that cinema remains a healthy, flourishing art form, and with this series, which brings together many of our favorite films of the past year, we hope to prove that point."

The opening film, on Friday, January 6, will be *Almayer's Folly*, Chantal Akerman's adaptation of Joseph Conrad's first novel, and will be accompanied by a personal appearance by Akerman and an opening reception.

With the exception of *Without* and the Artavazd Peleshian shorts, the films in *First Look* are all New York premieres. The titles are:

- ***Almayer's Folly***, Belgian filmmaker **Chantal Akerman's** free adaptation of Joseph Conrad's first novel about the faded dreams of a European trader and his ruptured relationship with his half-Malay daughter
- From Italian documentarian **Pietro Marcello**, ***The Silence of Peleshian (Il silenzio di Pelesjan)***, a lyrical portrait of the Armenian master filmmaker **Artavazd Peleshian** and screenings of two of Peleshian's greatest films, ***The Seasons of the Year*** and ***Life***
- Nominee for the Gotham Awards' "Best Movie Not Playing at a Theater Near You," **Mark Jackson's** feature film debut ***Without***, a taut psychological thriller set in a remote Pacific Northwest locale (Jackson, cinematographer Jessica Dimmock, and star Joslyn Jensen will appear in person)
- Winner of the Un Certain Regard special jury prize, Cannes Film Festival, ***Elena*** from Russian filmmaker **Andrei Zvyagintsev** (*The Return*), a contemporary family drama that has the intensity and inevitability of a great *film noir*, and featuring an original score by Philip Glass
- ***It's the Earth Not the Moon***, Portuguese filmmaker **Gonçalo Tocha's** ambitious, quixotic portrait of the island of Corvo in the Azores, a tiny dot in the vast Atlantic and the westernmost point of Europe
- ***It May Be That Beauty Has Strengthened Our Resolve: Masao Adachi***, a portrait of the controversial Japanese filmmaker (and one-time Red Army member) by **Philippe Grandrieux**, the French director known for intense nocturnal dramas like *La Vie nouvelle*; showing with **Gabriel Abrantes and Daniel Schmidt's** hourlong fable ***Palaces of Pity***
- ***That Summer (Un été brûlant)***, the latest tour de force by **Philippe Garrel**, French cinema's great romantic, about a brooding artist (Louis Garrel) and his actress wife (Monica Bellucci)
- **Théo Court's** feature debut ***Ocaso***, an exquisite document of the last days of an old man's useful existence as caretaker of a decaying farmhouse estate in Chile; screening with **João Rui Guerra da Mata and João Pedro Rodrigues's** short ***Red Dawn***, set in a Macao wet market
- Winner of the Best First Feature award at the Locarno Film Festival, **Valérie Massadian's** ***Nana***, an intimate, enigmatic expression of life from the point of view of a child abandoned in rural France; screening with Argentinian director **Lisandro Alonso's** ***Letter to Serra*** (Massadian will appear in person)
- ***Life Without Principle***, Hong Kong director **Johnnie To's** most complex film since 2005's *Election*
- ***Papirosen***, a deeply affecting meditation on the meaning of family and the weight of history from young Argentinian director **Gastón Solnicki**, incorporating a decade's worth of home movies from his own family (director in person)

- ***The City Below***, a sleek, provocative drama from German filmmaker **Christoph Hochhäusler**, who recently directed the final installment of the widely acclaimed *Dreileben* trilogy
- Road trip meets acid trip in ***Buena noches, Espana***, a bold Super-8 feature by the prodigious Filipino filmmaker **Raya Martin**, showing with two shorts by Martin, ***Ars Colonia*** and ***Boxing in the Philippine Islands*** (director in person)

Tickets for the opening night event, the screening of Chantal Akerman's *Almayer's Folly* and reception, are \$15 and may be purchased in advance. All other *First Look* screenings are included with Museum admission, which is \$12 for adults and \$9 for senior citizens and college students. A **First Look series pass**, allowing the holder admission to the Museum and all *First Look* screenings for the run of the series, will be available for \$40. **All screenings, including the opening event, are free for Museum members.** Memberships start at \$75 with benefits that include year-round free admission to the Museum and its programs, reservation privileges, and discounts on special programs.

*First Look* is presented with support from the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States.

DVD screeners for press are available for many films. A press screening of one or two films will be announced soon.

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### **SCHEDULE FOR 'FIRST LOOK,' JANUARY 6–15, 2012**

All screenings take place at Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35 Avenue in Astoria. Screenings are included with Museum admission unless otherwise noted. Tickets for Friday evening screenings (when the Museum offers free gallery admission) are \$12 adults / \$9 students and senior citizens.

#### ***Almayer's Folly (La folie Almayer)***

#### **With Chantal Akerman in person and opening reception**

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 7:00 P.M.

France. Dir. Chantal Akerman. 2011, 127 mins. New York Premiere. With Stanislas Merhar, Marc Barbé, Aurora Marion, Zac Andrianasolo. Chantal Akerman's masterful and mesmerizing *Almayer's Folly* freely adapts Joseph Conrad's first novel. A European trader's dreams of striking it rich in Malaysia have faded, and all he has is his ruptured relationship with his half-Malay daughter; Akerman reimagines the story, including the daughter's and mother's viewpoints. From the startling opening sequence—the stabbing of an entertainer at an outdoor music bar while Dean Martin's "Sway" plays—the film unfolds with trancelike power. Beautifully photographed in thick jungle terrain, *Almayer's Folly* synthesizes the long-take formalism of Akerman's earlier work with the spontaneity and freedom of her documentaries; it is as much influenced by F.W. Murnau and Robert Flaherty's *Tabu* as it is by Conrad.

**Tickets: \$15 public / Free for Museum members.** Advance tickets available online at [movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us) or by calling 718 777 6800

### ***The Silence of Peleshian (Il silenzio di Pelesjan)***

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 2:30 P.M.

Italy. Dir. Pietro Marcello. 2011, 52 mins. Known for his poetic documentaries (*The Mouth of the Wolf*), Italian director Pietro Marcello has created a unique and lyrical portrait of the brilliant Armenian filmmaker Artavazd Peleshian. Peleshian (b. 1938) pioneered a dynamic, associative editing technique known as “distance montage” that was inspired by Dziga Vertov, combining original and archival footage in a dazzling impressionistic style. *The Silence of Peleshian* combines scenes from Peleshian’s films with new footage of him in present-day Moscow, as a silent recluse. The documentary will be followed by screenings of two of Peleshian’s greatest films, ***The Seasons of the Year*** (*Vremena goda*, 1975, 30 mins.) and ***Life*** (1993, 7 mins.). Of the former, Peleshian said “I was thinking of everything. It’s not specifically the seasons of the year or of people: it’s everything.” *Life* is about the process, and meaning, of birth.

### ***Without***

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 5:00 P.M.

#### **With Mark Jackson, Jessica Dimmock, and Joslyn Jensen in person**

USA. Dir. Mark Jackson. 2011, 88 mins. With Joslyn Jensen, Ron Carrier. An astonishingly assured debut from director Mark Jackson, cinematographer Jessica Dimmock, and lead actress Joslyn Jensen, *Without* is a blend of psychological thriller and introspective drama, set against the sodden, gray backdrop of a remote Pacific Northwest island. Jensen plays a young woman, only a year out of high school and processing heavy grief, who takes a job as temporary caretaker to a vegetative elderly man. Alone with him in the house, with no cell signal, no Internet, and no one else for miles, she alternates between enjoying the old man’s company and feeling unease around him. As the solitary days pass, she becomes increasingly encumbered by guilt, and her boredom transitions into paranoia.

### ***Elena***

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 7:30 P.M.

Russia. Dir. Andrei Zvyagintsev. 2011, 109 mins. With Andrey Smirnov, Nadezhda Markina, Elena Lyadova. Music by Philip Glass. This contemporary family drama by the director of *The Return* has the intensity and inevitability of a great *film noir*, focused on a domestic crime that reveals the story’s simmering tensions concerning class, money, and the disparity between old and new Russia. Middle-aged Elena lives in a luxurious modern apartment with Vladimir, her older husband, who she once cared for as a nurse. Elena struggles to support her irresponsible son, while Vladimir cares financially for his estranged rebellious daughter. A dazzlingly accomplished film from first frame to last, *Elena* boasts expressive widescreen photography and a spare, powerful Philip Glass score, at the service of perfectly modulated central performances that allow for deep ambivalence toward the film’s fascinating characters. Special jury prize, Cannes Film Festival, Un Certain Regard.

### ***It’s the Earth Not the Moon***

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, 2:30 P.M.

Portugal. Dir. Gonalo Tocha. 2011, 183 mins. The remote island of Corvo, part of the Azores

archipelago, is the westernmost point of Europe, a tiny speck of land in the middle of the Atlantic ocean. Accompanied by his soundman/composer Didio Pestana, Portuguese filmmaker Gonçalo Tocha arrived at this isolated former whaling outpost (population 440) intending "to film everything we can... to try to be everywhere at the same time." The patient attempt to fulfill this impossible task results in the most generous, quixotic, and quietly magical of anthropological projects. A work of profound curiosity and tenderness, *It's the Earth Not the Moon* is raptly fascinated with all aspects of life on Corvo: labor and leisure, customs and rituals, the current political scene and the myths of the past. Best Feature, DocLisboa Film Festival, and Special Mention, Filmmakers of the Present, Locarno Film Festival.

***It May Be That Beauty Has Strengthened Our Resolve: Masao Adachi***

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, 7:00 P.M.

France. Dir. Philippe Grandrieux. 2011, 73 mins. The controversial Japanese filmmaker and one-time Red Army member Masao Adachi has been an exemplar of revolutionary cinema since the 1960s, in his own work (*Prisoner/Terrorist*) and in collaboration with Nagisa Oshima (*Diary of a Shinjuku Thief*) and Koji Wakamatsu (the recent *Caterpillar*). In this entrancing documentary portrait, Grandrieux, the French director known for intense nocturnal dramas like *La Vie nouvelle*, visits Adachi in Tokyo and captures the fleeting gestures and the undying beliefs that make up the man. Reflecting an intimate exchange between author and subject, it's a film that lives up to its grand title: at once beautiful and resolute, living fully in what Adachi calls "the world of ideas" and "the world of sensations."

Screening with ***Palaces of Pity (Palácios de Pena)***. Portugal. Dir. Gabriel Abrantes and Daniel Schmidt. 2011, 59 mins. Genres and eras are thoroughly scrambled in this perverse, boldly stylized fable, an unpredictable amalgam of coming-of-age melodrama, medieval pageant, and political allegory. Moving through a series of mysterious, charged spaces — an empty stadium, a steep escarpment, the bottom of a well — the film's young heroines confront the complexities of desire and an inherited legacy of oppression via their ailing grandmother, who recounts a dream of being a judge during the Inquisition.

***That Summer (Un été brûlant)***

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 7:30 P.M.

France. Dir. Philippe Garrel. 2011, 95 mins. With Louis Garrel, Monica Bellucci, Jérôme Robart, Céline Sallette. In the latest tour de force by Garrel, French cinema's great romantic, a brooding artist (Louis Garrel) and his actress wife (Bellucci) spend a tumultuous summer in Rome with another couple, both bit-part actors (Robart and Sallette). Garrel's themes of disillusionment and the end of love recur with a deeply felt directness in this film of rich colors and heated emotions. The ghosts of the past, not least those of movie history, haunt *That Summer*, which includes nods to Jean-Luc Godard's *Contempt*, scenes on the fabled Cinecittà set, and the moving final screen appearance of the director's father, the late, great Maurice Garrel.

***Ocaso (Decline)***

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14, 2:30 P.M.

Chile/Dominican Republic. Dir. Théo Court. 2010, 80 mins. Court's feature debut follows the last days of an old man's useful existence as caretaker of a decaying farmhouse estate in Chile, and documents the decline of a way of life. A remarkable example of hybrid storytelling, the film shows the man completing his grueling daily routine on what may be his last day of work, as

workmen and machines arrive to begin renovations on the house. A series of still shots depict the timeless continuity of his labor and his integration with these verdant surroundings—the camera’s work with light through the heavy thicket is both gorgeous and oppressive. The future is bitterly uncertain, but the film ends on a note of nostalgic contemplation.

Preceded by ***Red Dawn***. Portugal. Dir. João Rui Guerra da Mata and João Pedro Rodrigues. 2011, 20 mins. A visit to a Macao wet market reveals a dream state between life and death—and demonstrates, by way of a playful homage to Jane Russell, cinema’s resurrectionary power.

### ***Nana***

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14, 5:00 P.M.

#### **With Valérie Massadian in person**

France. Dir. Valérie Massadian. 2011, 68 mins. With Kelyna Lecomte, Alain Sabras, Marie Delmas. Winner of the Best First Feature award at the Locarno Film Festival, *Nana* is an intimate, enigmatic expression of life from the point of view of a child that never veers into childishness or sentimentality. Unfolding in fixed takes around a French country farmhouse, the film follows four year-old Nana (Lecomte), inexplicably abandoned by adults, and left to tackle life on her own. As she plays, prepares food, and tends to the blazing hearth, the building tension of her guardian-less solitude is tempered by her continual new discoveries.

Preceded by ***Letter to Serra***. Argentina. Dir. Lisandro Alonso. 2011, 23 mins. Conceived as a correspondence with the Spanish director Albert Serra, this wryly self-reflexive dispatch finds the Argentinian director Alonso (*Los Muertos*, *Liverpool*) taking aim at his past and imagining his future.

### ***Life Without Principle***

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14, 7:30 P.M.

Hong Kong. Dir. Johnnie To. 2011, 107 mins. With Lau Ching Wan, Richie Jen, Denise Ho. In his most remarkable and complex work since 2005’s *Election*, To’s latest follows three characters across three days, each affected, in very different ways, by the murder of a local loan shark and the collapse in world stock markets caused by the Greek debt crisis. As their stories orbit and eventually collide, the film unfolds as a critique of Hong Kong materialism and greed, and an investigation of the manifold ways lives are shattered by global financial speculation.

### ***Papirosen***

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 2:30 P.M.

#### **With Gastón Solnicki in person**

Argentina. Dir. Gastón Solnicki. 2011, 74 mins. Fashioning nearly 200 hours of footage shot over a decade into a family portrait at once epic and intimate, the young Argentinian filmmaker Solnicki (whose previous film was the music documentary *Suden*) elevates the home movie to an art. Four generations of his Buenos Aires clan are captured on vacations and at family gatherings, as well as in small everyday moments. Digging into the family archives (vintage 8mm footage, a video recording of a bar mitzvah) and incorporating the musings of his grandmother, Pola, a Holocaust survivor, Solnicki crafts a deeply affecting meditation on the meaning of family and the weight of history.

### ***The City Below***

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 5:00 P.M.

Germany. Dir. Christoph Hochhäusler. 2010, 110 mins. With Robert Hunger-Bühler, Mark Waschke, Nicolette Krebitz. Boardroom and bedroom intrigue collide in this sleek, provocative drama by the German filmmaker Hochhäusler, who recently directed the final installment of the widely acclaimed *Dreileben* trilogy. As an adulterous triangle forms among an up-and-coming banker (Waschke), his beautiful young wife (Krebitz) and his predatory boss (Hunger-Bühler), Hochhäusler orchestrates a zombified ritual of seduction and repulsion, both carnal and financial. More than topical, *The City Below* peers into the glass canyons of the world of global capital and finds not just the malfeasance of today's headlines, but a deeper sense of existential unease and, in the stunning conclusion, even a glimpse of the apocalypse.

### ***Buenas noches, España***

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 7:30 P.M.

#### **With Raya Martin in person**

Spain/Philippines. Dir. Raya Martin. 2011, 70 mins. With Pilar López de Ayala, Andrés Gertrúdx. Road trip meets acid trip in this bold Super-8 feature by Martin, the prodigious Filipino filmmaker who has explored multiple facets of his national history and identity through ingenious aesthetic means. Driving through the Spanish countryside, a young man (Gertrúdx) meets a young woman (López de Ayala); they end up at a museum in Bilbao, before the paintings of the revolutionary Filipino artist Juan Luna. Inspired by an account of intercolony teleportation (the story of a 16<sup>th</sup>-century soldier in Manila who turned up in Mexico City), this mind-bending experiment uses psychedelic colors, repeated loops, and audio drone to evoke a sense of being out of time, lost in history. Preceded by *Ars Colonia* (dir. Raya Martin, 2011, 1 min.), a vibrant, hand-colored film-painting of a conquistador at sea, and *Boxing in the Philippine Islands* (dir. Raya Martin, 2011, 6 mins.), a pinhole look at the national pastime.

### **MUSEUM INFORMATION**

Hours: Tuesday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 10:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. **Holiday opening:** The Museum will be open on Monday, January 17 from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled.

Museum Admission: \$12.00 for adults; \$9.00 for persons over 65 and for students with ID; \$6.00 for children ages 3-18. Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free.

Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tickets for special screenings and events may be purchased in advance by phone at 718 777 6800 or online.

Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R to Steinway Street. Q (weekdays only) or N to 36 Avenue.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: [movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us)

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and its operations are made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation). The Museum also receives generous support from numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals. For more information, please visit [movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us).

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