

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAURICE PIALAT, THE FRENCH DIRECTOR KNOWN FOR HIS EMOTIONALLY RAW, INCISIVE FILMS, RECEIVES A MAJOR RETROSPECTIVE

Museum retrospective, which will tour to three other venues, includes *À nos amours*, *Police*, *Loulou*, and more—with all features presented in 35mm

October 16–November 1, 2015

PRESS SCREENING ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, BEGINNING AT 11:00 A.M.: *NAKED CHILDHOOD*, *GRADUATE FIRST*, AND *UNDER THE SUN OF SATAN*. [RSVP HERE](#).

Astoria, New York, September 29, 2015—Arriving on the scene after the French New Wave, with emotionally raw, tumultuous films that reflect his own life and personality, Maurice Pialat (1925–2003) was widely acclaimed in France, but underappreciated in the United States. In the years after his death, his influence was everywhere and can be seen today in films by directors such as Olivier Assayas, Catherine Breillat, Claire Denis, and Arnaud Desplechin, among others. Pialat's ten features (including some never released theatrically in the United States), his 1971 TV miniseries *La maison des bois*, and a selection of his short films will be shown in a major retrospective—with all features in 35mm—at Museum of the Moving Image from October 16 through November 1, 2015.

On the opening weekend of the retrospective, Sylvie Pialat, the prolific and accomplished film producer and widow of Maurice Pialat, will appear in person with screenings of *Naked Childhood (L'enfance nue)* (1968), an unsentimental drama of an orphaned boy, to be shown with Pialat's first film, the short *L'amour existe* (1961) (Oct. 16); *Loulou* (1980), a tale of sexual obsession starring Isabelle Huppert and Gérard Depardieu (Oct. 17); and *Le garçon* (1995), Pialat's final film, another thinly veiled autobiographical drama starring Depardieu as a father coming to terms with his own father's death (with the Pialats's own son Antoine as the young boy) (Oct. 18). *Le garçon* will be shown in a new 35mm print from the Cinematheque francaise.

Sylvie Pialat, who has just won three prizes at the San Sebastian Film Festival, will also select and introduce a surprise screening of a film she produced (on Oct. 17). As a producer, Pialat has been associated with such titles as *Stranger by the Lake* (2013. Dir. Alain Guiraudie), *The Kidnapping of Michel Houellebecq* (2014. Dir. Guillaume Nicloux), *Timbuktu* (2014. Dir. Abderrahmane Sissako), and most recently, two films

that have garnered major awards at international festivals: *White Knights* (2015. Dir. Joachim Lafosse) and *Evolution* (2015. Dir. Lucille Hadzihalilovic). Her selection will be announced on the Museum's website (movingimage.us).

Three of Maurice Pialat's films are considered to be among the most important French films of the last 50 years: *À nos amours* (1983), for which he "discovered" actor Sandrine Bonnaire and cast her as a teenager in the throes of rebellion and sexual experimentation; *We Won't Grow Old Together* (1972), a thorny, thrilling end-of-an-affair drama memorably starring Jean Yanne as the older married man carrying on with a much younger woman; and *Van Gogh* (1991), considered one of the greatest films about a painter ever made. Of his style, critic Richard Brody has coined the term "pugnacious naturalism," a reference to both Pialat's personality and to his roving camera that captures emotional and violent outbursts, conveying an in-the-moment immediacy.

A very demanding director of actors, Pialat featured Gérard Depardieu in four movies (beginning with *Loulou* and ending with *Le garçon*, both mentioned above), in roles that suggest a cinematic alter ego for the director. In *Police* (1985), Depardieu stars as a brutish police officer who falls for a femme fatale (played by then pop idol Sophie Marceau) whom he first terrorizes in interrogation, then later romances. For *Under the Sun of Satan* (1987)—which won the coveted Palme d'Or at Cannes in a ceremony notorious for the audience jeers and Pialat's own insulting response—Pialat cast Depardieu as a priest who agonizes over the sins of a young woman (Bonnaire), based on a story by Georges Bernanos (whose novels were also famously made into films by Robert Bresson).

Among the very rarely shown titles in the retrospective are: *La maison des bois* (1971), a six-hour French TV miniseries, a World War I drama set in the countryside far from the front, where displaced children are sheltered; six lyrical short documentaries Pialat made in 1964 about the history and people of Turkey, covering subjects including the poet Nazim Hikmet (*Maître Galip*), the history of the city of Istanbul generally and its Golden Horn peninsula in particular, and more; *Graduate First (Passe ton bac d'abord...)* (1978), an intimate look at teens in a French mining town, a work that shows Pialat's affinity with the working class and that was a key influence on Olivier Assayas's *Cold Water* for its depiction of youth hanging out; and *The Mouth Agape* (1974), a look at the end of life, starring Philippe Léotard as a devoted son who returns home to care for his dying mother (Monique Mélinand).

For a complete schedule and descriptions see below or visit movingimage.us. Advance tickets are available online at movingimage.us. Tickets are \$12 for adults (\$9 for seniors and students / free for Museum members at the Film Lover level and above).

Following the Museum's run, the retrospective will travel to TIFF Cinematheque in

Toronto, the Harvard Film Archive, and the Center for Moving Image Arts at Bard College.

The Maurice Pialat retrospective is organized by Chief Curator David Schwartz and Assistant Film Curator Aliza Ma and presented with support from Unifrance, the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, and Institut Francais. Special thanks to Mathieu Fournet, Aude Hesbert, Adeline Monzier, Amelie Garin-Davet, and Sylvie Pialat.

“The Museum’s Pialat retrospective shines a light on a director who deserves to be better known to American audiences, especially at a time when his influence can be so clearly seen in the work of contemporary French directors who are finding international success,” said David Schwartz.

“Maurice Pialat is one of the most important filmmakers of all time. Possessed of an unsurpassed raw humanity, his cinema is untamable, unforgettable, and deeply personal. We have long-desired to bring these films to New York, and beyond, in the best imported archival film prints, and to have Sylvie Pialat present during the retrospective’s opening weekend,” said Aliza Ma.

SCHEDULE FOR ‘MAURICE PIALAT,’ OCTOBER 16–NOVEMBER 1, 2015

Unless otherwise noted, screenings take place in the Sumner M. Redstone Theater or the Celeste and Armand Bartos Screening Room at Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35 Avenue in Astoria, New York. Tickets for MOMI screenings are \$12 adults (\$9 seniors and students / \$6 children 3–12) and free for Museum members at the Film Lover level and above. Advance tickets are available online at <http://movingimage.us>. Ticket purchase includes same-day admission to the Museum’s galleries.

Naked Childhood (L'enfance nue)

With Sylvie Pialat in person

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Maurice Pialat. 1968, 83 mins. 35mm. With Michel Terrazon, Raoul Billerey, Maurice Coussonneau, Pierrette Deplanque, Linda Gutemberg. Terrazon gives one of the most affectless child performances ever recorded in Pialat’s wrenching film, playing a troubled orphan being shunted between foster families until he begins to hope that he has discovered a home. Pialat both acknowledges and builds upon the autobiographical directness of François Truffaut’s revolutionary *The 400 Blows* (1959) in his own fiction feature debut (which Truffaut produced). Preceded by *L’amour existe* (1960, 21 mins. Digital projection).

Turkish Shorts

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1:30 P.M.

Dir. Maurice Pialat. 1964, 74 mins. Digital projection. In 1964, Pialat and cinematographer Willy Kurant (*Masculin Féminin*) headed to Turkey, where they produced a series of six lyrical shorts dedicated to the country’s history and people. Subjects included the poetry of Nazim Hikmet (*Maître Galip*), the history of the city of Istanbul generally and its Golden Horn peninsula in

particular (*Byzance, Istanbul, Bosphore* and *La corne d'or*), and the wrestling competition at Pehlivan (*Pehlivan*). Prefiguring Pialat's later shorts on French regional subjects, these films offer a valuable glimpse of the artist honing his style, and an insight into the particular relationship between documentary and fiction in his filmmaking.

Loulou

With Sylvie Pialat in person

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 3:30 P.M.

Dir. Maurice Pialat. 1980, 101 mins. 35mm. With Isabelle Huppert, Gérard Depardieu, Guy Marchand, Humbert Balsan. Pialat's powerful portrait of sexual obsession is, like *We Won't Grow Old Together*, a love story without a future, though here the perspective is more closely aligned with that of the female protagonist. Nelly (Huppert) jilts her lover André (Marchand), her match in intellect and social standing, and takes up with a leather-clad blue-collar ruffian, Loulou (Depardieu, beginning a fruitful collaboration with Pialat), with whom she shares an undeniable sexual chemistry and practically nothing else. "Pialat remains one of a handful of filmmakers genuinely interested in and capable of getting inside a woman's head and projecting her desires onscreen."—Molly Haskell

Sylvie Pialat Selects

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 7:00 P.M.

Title to be announced. Check movingimage.us for updates.

Police

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 4:00 P.M.

Dir. Maurice Pialat. 1985, 113 mins. 35mm. With Gérard Depardieu, Sophie Marceau, Sandrine Bonnaire. Sophie Marceau was a teen idol, thanks to the wildly popular *La Boum* movies, when she decided to shed the shiny pop image and partner with the eternally prickly Pialat—an unlikely pairing which led to remarkable results. Inspector Mangin (Depardieu) is working to crack a drug ring when he falls in with a dolorous moll, Noria (Marceau), and loses his head. Co-screenwriter Catherine Breillat submerged herself in the lower depths of the cops-and-crooks milieu to lend the film its documentary detail, while Depardieu gave it its basis of total emotional conviction, which earned him a Best Actor award from the Venice Film Festival.

Le garçon

Introduced by Sylvie Pialat

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Maurice Pialat. 1995, 102 mins. 35mm. With Gérard Depardieu, Géraldine Pailhas, Antoine Pialat, Dominique Rocheteau. In Pialat's final film, shot in Cunlhat, the village of his birth, and a holiday retreat in Mauritius, he returned to the autobiographical mode of *We Won't Grow Old Together* and *The Mouth Agape*, dealing in fictional form with the death of his father and his new role as a father himself. Depardieu returns to play Gérard who sees too clearly his own obsolescence in the family unit. *Le garçon* is a structurally audacious, devastating coda to an unparalleled career.

À nos amours (To Our Loves)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Maurice Pialat. 1983, 95 mins. 35mm. With Sandrine Bonnaire, Evelyne Ker, Dominique

Besnehard, Maurice Pialat. Looking for a star for what would become his masterpiece of sexual rebellion, Pialat cast a working-class sixteen-year-old living in the suburbs of Paris as his lead, and so began the remarkable career of Sandrine Bonnaire. The awakened womanhood of teenaged Suzanne (Bonnaire) is just more fuel to the fire in the volatile apartment/workshop that she shares with her family, including a gruff, irascible patriarch (Pialat). Co-written by Pialat's frequent collaborator Arlette Langmann, who helped the director to access a female perspective, *À nos amours* belongs on any shortlist of the greatest French films of the twentieth century.

We Won't Grow Old Together (Nous ne vieillirons pas ensemble)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Maurice Pialat. 1972, 110 mins. 35mm. With Marlène Jobert, Jean Yanne, Macha Méril. The specter of regret haunts this punishingly personal film, in which Pialat, beneath a thin patina of fiction, conducted an autopsy on his own long-running affair with a younger woman. Jean Yanne plays the moody, sometimes-brutal substitute for the director, while Marlène Jobert plays his companion, a working-class secretary who aids him in furthering his stalled career. Pialat compared his film to Ravel's "Boléro," structured as it is as a cycle of recurring lovers' quarrels, a fight to the end that reaches an unexpected, poignant outcome

The Mouth Agape (La gueule ouverte)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 4:30 P.M.

Dir. Maurice Pialat. 1974, 82 mins. 35mm. With Philippe Léotard, Nathalie Baye, Hubert Deschamps, Monique Mélinand. After looking at the death throes of a relationship in *We Won't Grow Old Together*, Pialat turned to the end of life itself in his bold, uncompromised, and incredibly confident third feature, whose grueling subject matter stands in contrast to the great cinematographer Nestor Almendros's lovely, naturalistic lighting. Philippe (Léotard) returns to his boyhood home to deal with his terminally ill mother (Mélinand), an ordeal that concludes in a heartbreaking final shot. "[Pialat] never imposes any moral judgment but simply demonstrates how people in their discontent and emotional vulnerability struggle to draw comfort from one another." —David Thomson

Graduate First (Passe ton bac d'abord...)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Maurice Pialat. 1978, 86 mins. 35mm. With Sabine Haudepin, Philippe Marlaud, Annick Alane, Michel Caron. Conceived as a follow-up to *Naked Childhood*, Pialat's fourth film looks at life among a group of working-class teenage boys and girls in the suburbs of a poor mining town. Less a plot-driven narrative than a series of vignettes, *Graduate First* endeavors to capture the texture and rhythm of the lives depicted, their listless casual sex and drug use, petty behavior, and grudging acceptance of their proscribed social roles. The least-screened of Pialat's works, *Graduate First* anticipates future pieces of 1970s social archaeology like Oliver Assayas's *Cold Water* and Richard Linklater's *Dazed and Confused*.

Under the Sun of Satan (Sous le soleil de Satan)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 4:30 P.M.

Dir. Maurice Pialat. 1987, 97 mins. 35mm. With Gérard Depardieu, Sandrine Bonnaire, Maurice Pialat. For the film that would win him the Palme d'Or at Cannes—he taunted his enemies as he collected the prize—trudging realist Pialat set foot on sacred ground, adapting a classic novel

by Georges Bernanos, whose work had previously provided the basis for two canonical films by Robert Bresson. Depardieu, now ensconced as Pialat's go-to star, plays a country priest who is trying to save the soul of a local girl, Mouchette (Bonnaire), warned against the too-passionate faith he displays by an elder superior, played by Pialat himself.

Van Gogh

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Maurice Pialat. 1991, 158 mins. 35mm. With Jacques Dutronc, Alexandra London, Bernard Le Coq, Gérard Séty. Considered one of the greatest films about a painter ever made, Pialat's *Van Gogh* is less an homage to the misunderstood genius than an evocation of the entire era, bringing the Belle Epoque to life on screen. Dutronc stars as the artist, a cranky pain who won't allow himself to be helped by brother Théo (Le Coq) or benefactor Dr. Gachet (Séty), whose daughter (London) he takes up with. Pialat began as a painter, and with this vividly-realized period epic, reached his apotheosis as a filmmaker. Preceded by *Van Gogh* (1966, 7mins. Digital projection).

La maison des bois

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1:00 P.M.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1:00 P.M.

Please note: there will be a one-hour intermission at 4:00 p.m.; the second half of the miniseries will resume at 5:00 p.m.

Dir. Maurice Pialat. 1971, 360 mins. Digital projection. With Pierre Doris, Jacqueline Dufranne, Agathe Nathanson, Henri Puff. This seven-episode, six-hour miniseries is a quotidian epic that presents an unusual perspective on World War I—a masterpiece scarcely known to the English-speaking viewer. Rather than taking place amid the familiar images of trenches and bunkers, *La maison des bois* is set on the placid homefront—focusing on the family of a gamekeeper and his wife in a rural village far away from the front who take in children displaced by the war.

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Select screeners are available for press use, plus a press screening of three films has been scheduled for October 1.

MUSEUM INFORMATION

Museum of the Moving Image (movingimage.us) advances the understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. In its stunning facilities—acclaimed for both its accessibility and bold design—the Museum presents exhibitions; screenings of significant works; discussion programs featuring actors, directors, craftspeople, and business leaders; and education programs which serve more than 50,000 students each year. The Museum also houses a significant collection of moving-image artifacts.

Hours: Wednesday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Museum Admission: \$12.00 for adults; \$9.00 for persons over 65 and for students with ID; \$6.00 for children ages 3–12. Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled. Unless otherwise noted, tickets are \$12 adults / \$9 students and seniors / \$6 children 3–12 / free for Museum members at the Film Lover level and above. Advance purchase is available online. Film tickets include same-day admission to the Museum's galleries.

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

Membership: <http://movingimage.us/support/membership> or 718 777 6877

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and located on the campus of Kaufman Astoria Studios. 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.