

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MOMI PRESENTS RETROSPECTIVE 'FILM IS LIKE A BATTLEGROUND: SAM FULLER'S WAR MOVIES'

Eleven-film series based on guest curator Marsha Gordon's new book features introductions by the author

September 15–24, 2017

Astoria, Queens, New York, September 1, 2017—American director Samuel Fuller famously said “A film is like a battleground,” in his cameo in Jean-Luc Godard's *Pierrot Le Fou*. “There's love, hate, action, violence, death. In one word, emotion.” For the hardboiled World War II veteran who began making movies in 1948, these words are meant both figuratively and literally. Whether looking at World War II, the Korean War, or the post-war period, war was his favorite subject. From September 15 through 24, Museum of the Moving Image will present ***Film Is Like a Battleground: Sam Fuller's War Movies***, an eleven-film series organized by Marsha Gordon, Professor of Film at North Carolina State University and author of the eponymous new book (2017, Oxford University Press). Gordon will introduce all of the screenings on the opening weekend, and will sign copies of her book on Saturday, September 16.

The series includes nine films directed by Fuller: ***The Steel Helmet*** (1951), ***Fixed Bayonets!*** (1951), ***Merrill's Marauders*** (1962), ***Verboten!*** (1959), ***China Gate*** (1957), ***House of Bamboo*** (1955), ***Pickup on South Street*** (1953), ***Hell and High Water*** (1954), and ***The Big Red One: The Reconstruction*** (1980–2005), featuring a restoration of footage after a heavily cut initial theatrical release. These will be accompanied by two documentaries about Fuller: ***A Fuller Life*** (2013), directed by Sam Fuller's daughter Samantha Fuller, and ***Falkenau, the Impossible*** (1988), Emile Weiss's documentary featuring an interview with Fuller and the first (and formative) footage he ever shot of the grim liberation of the Czechoslovakian Nazi prison camp. Most films will be presented in 35mm.

In his memoir *A Third Face*, Sam Fuller wrote vividly: “People who've never lived through it will never—never!—know what war's unfeelingness feels like, never know the cold taste of metal in your mouth just before the violence begins, the wet toes, the churning in your stomach that seems like it's going to burn a hole in your belly, the dull drumming in your brain, the ghoulish visions come to life. Hell, words just can't describe it.”

The full schedule is included below and online at movingimage.us/fuller.

SCHEDULE

Tickets are \$15 (\$11 seniors, students, Standard level members / Free for Museum members at the Film Lover, and Kids Premium levels and above). Advance tickets are available online at <http://movingimage.us>.

The Big Red One: The Reconstruction

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Samuel Fuller. 1980-2005, 158 mins. 35mm. With Lee Marvin, Mark Hamill, Robert Carradine. Drawn from his own experiences fighting in the First Infantry Division in World War II, *The Big Red One* was Sam Fuller's most personal and ambitious movie. Heavily edited for its initial release, the film was reconstructed 25 years later, with nearly 40 minutes of additional footage, by film critic Richard Schickel. This epic follows a sergeant and the inner core members of his unit as they attempt to survive World War II.

A Fuller Life

Introduced by Marsha Gordon. Followed by book signing in Museum Store

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1:30 P.M.

Dir. Samantha Fuller. 2013, 80 mins. DCP. With James Franco, Jennifer Beals, Bill Duke. Samuel Fuller's daughter directed this loving tribute to her father and his legacy. Friends, admirers, and peers read from Fuller's memoirs, while anecdotes are illustrated with archival footage and excerpts from his films. This approach artfully reflects the richness of Fuller's art and his life, making for a unique, compelling portrait.

The Steel Helmet

Introduced by Marsha Gordon

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 3:30 P.M.

Dir. Samuel Fuller. 1951, 85 mins. 35mm. With Gene Evans, Robert Hutton, Steve Brodie. A squad of American stragglers battles Communist troops in an abandoned Buddhist temple during the Korean War. Featuring an "unheroic and uncharismatic protagonist aligned with a marginally cohesive and make-shift group," *The Steel Helmet* is a terse, unsentimental look at war that contains rare, provocative debate about racial discrimination and the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Fixed Bayonets!

Introduced by Marsha Gordon

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Samuel Fuller. 1951, 92 mins. 35mm. With Richard Basehart, Gene Evans, Michael O'Shea. Pitched as a "straight from the headlines" quasi-documentary, *Fixed Bayonets!* tells the story of an American platoon entangled in a retreat of United Nations forces across North Korea. Rather than providing an unequivocal polemic on American patriotism, Fuller instead emphasizes the profound aimlessness of war.

DOUBLE FEATURE:

Falkenau, The Impossible / Merrill's Marauders

Introduced by Marsha Gordon

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 4:00 P.M.

Falkenau, The Impossible. Dir. Emil Weiss. 1988, 52 mins. Digital projection. With Samuel Fuller. *Falkenau, The Impossible* is about the first film shot by legendary director Samuel Fuller. As a member of the First Infantry Division, he filmed the liberation of a Czechoslovakian Nazi prison camp in 1945. Forty-three years later, the French filmmaker Emil Weiss revives this footage, with Fuller offering a commentary. His indelible narration emphasizes the significance of visual evidence, and offers cogent reflections on violence, trauma, and remembering.

Followed by ***Merrill's Marauders.*** Dir. Samuel Fuller. 1962, 98 mins. 35mm. With Jeff Chandler, Ty Hardin, Peter Brown. During World War II, a 3,000-strong American unit, known as Merrill's Marauders, battles Japanese forces in Burma. As a Warner Bros. press release described, the film depicts "a continuing series of small, deadly actions and long marches under constant threat of death while jungle diseases nibble away at their number." Like Fuller's films on the Korean War, *Marauders* is a story about survival and tenacity.

Verboten!

Introduced by Marsha Gordon

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 7:15 P.M.

Dir. Samuel Fuller. 1959, 93 mins. 35mm. With James Best, Susan Cummings, Tom Pittman. "Their love was verboten!" proclaimed the ads for Sam Fuller's distinctly pulp dramatization of an infantryman, *Verboten!* tells the story of a young serviceman stationed in Germany after the fall of the Third Reich, and his budding romance with a German nurse. "Sweaty, claustrophobic, occasionally frenzied, and often brilliant, in a thoroughly iconoclastic (and marginally psychotic) way," wrote Dave Kehr in *The Chicago Reader*.

China Gate

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 4:30 P.M.

Dir. Samuel Fuller. 1957, 97 mins. 35mm. With Gene Barry, Angie Dickinson, Nat 'King' Cole. Fuller's dynamic black-and-white CinemaScope film is a prescient combat drama set in Vietnam in the 1950s. In 1954, during the French Indochina War, a female smuggler and a group of French Foreign Legion mercenaries infiltrate enemy territory. A decade after its release, the United States would be fully entangled in the "fight against communism in Southeast Asia." Political but also personal, *China Gate* considers the social and individual consequences of war, as well as American racism.

House of Bamboo

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Samuel Fuller. 1955, 102 mins. 35mm. With Robert Ryan, Robert Stack, Shirley Yamaguchi. In this loose remake of William Keighley's *The Street with No Name*, a U.S. Army Investigator attempts to infiltrate a gang of corrupt American soldiers in Tokyo. Fuller elevates a seemingly straightforward noir plot into an astute rumination on Japanese-American relations in the wake of World War II. Heady imagery, artful composition, and CinemaScope Technicolor photography also make for a compelling viewing experience.

Pickup on South Street

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 4:30 P.M.

Dir. Samuel Fuller. 1953, 80 mins. 35mm. With Richard Widmark, Jean Peters, Thelma Ritter. Samuel Fuller's first Cold-War film. A pickpocket unwittingly lifts a message destined for enemy agents and becomes a target for a Communist spy ring as well as the FBI. In the context of a fiercely anti-Communist entertainment climate, Fuller's Cold War films were "musings on the relationship between capitalism and patriotism." Ambiguous in its political stance, *South Street* is a compelling character study and a classic film noir.

Hell and High Water

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Samuel Fuller. 1954, 103 mins. 35mm. With Richard Widmark, Bella Darvi, Victor Francen. With a breathtaking use of its wide CinemaScope frame, *Hell and High Water* is Fuller's first film shot in Technicolor, and the second of his Cold-War films. In order to prevent a Communist plot, a scientific team refits a Japanese submarine and hires an ex-Navy officer to find a secret Chinese atomic island base. Like much of Fuller's best work, *Hell and High Water* has a bold "ripped straight-from-the-headlines" quality.

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Preview screeners are available. A limited number of review copies of Marsha Gordon's book *Film Is Like a Battleground: Sam Fuller's War Movies* are also available.

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.

New 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 6:00 p.m.

Museum Admission: \$15 adults; \$11 senior citizens (ages 65+) and students (ages 18+) with ID; \$7 youth (ages 3–17). 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 \$15 adults / \$11 students and seniors / \$7 youth (ages 3–17) / discounted or free for Museum members. Advance purchase is available online. Ticket purchase may be applied toward 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. W (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

Museum of the Moving Image is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and has received

significant support from the following public agencies: New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; New York City Economic Development Corporation; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; Institute of Museum and Library Services; National Endowment for the Humanities; National Endowment for the Arts; and Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation). For more information, please visit movingimage.us.