

1280 PEACHTREE STREET, N.E. • ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30309

Press Office

TEL 404-733-4437

FAX 404-733-4529

prinfo@woodruffcenter.org

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**FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL RETURNS TO THE HIGH
FOR THE 12th YEAR**

French Film Yesterday and Today
February 5–26, 2011

ATLANTA, January 26, 2011 – The High Museum of Art will host the 12th annual “French Film Yesterday and Today” series from Saturday, February 5, through Saturday, February 26. The four-film festival will include three contemporary releases—“Queen to Play,” “Kings of Pastry” and “Henri-Georges Clouzot’s *Inferno*”—as well as the classic production “The Rules of the Game.” This annual series is made possible with support from the Embassy of France Cultural Services and the Consulate of France in Atlanta.

“The theme of mastery that is integral to the idea of creating a masterpiece ties together the four films in this year’s ‘French Film Yesterday and Today’ program. Both ‘Queen to Play,’ a fiction film about a novice chess player, and ‘The Pastry Kings,’ which follows professional pastry chefs seeking France’s highest honors for their craft, explore the rewards and torments of seeking perfection,” said Linda Dubler, curator of media arts at the High. “‘Henri Georges Clouzot’s *Inferno*’ looks at the pitfalls and eventual madness that accompanies the self-conscious creation of a masterpiece. The series concludes with an undisputed masterpiece, Jean Renoir’s ‘The Rules of the Game,’ a film often listed among the top ten of all time.”

The festival begins Saturday, February 5, with “Queen to Play,” the debut film from Caroline Bottaro. Set on the island of Corsica, it tells the story of wife and mother H el ene, who works as a maid for a standoffish American ex-pat, Dr. Kroger. H el ene is used to being taken for granted and wanting little for herself, but one day she finds the nerve to ask Kroger to teach her chess after noticing a board in his study. Before long, H el ene is envisioning the black-and-white tiled floor she is mopping as a chess board and the tallest perfume bottle on her vanity as the almighty queen. On the website filmsdefrance.com, James Travers called Bottaro’s debut “an intensely moving, imaginatively crafted piece of cinema, which uses the chess motif intelligently and unpretentiously as a potent allegory for life.”

On Saturday, February 12, “Kings of Pastry” from celebrated documentarians D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus explores the quest and competition to be named “Meilleur Ouvrier de France” (Best Craftsman in France), a title that is awarded to one pastry chef after a grueling three-day contest that tries the nerves, talent and luck of its participants. The film follows to Lyon three

aspiring contestants—Jacquy Pfeiffer, co-founder of Chicago’s French Pastry School; Regis Lazard, competing for the second time; and Philippe Rigollot, from Maison Pic, France’s only three-star restaurant owned by a woman—as they measure themselves against their peers. For those who labor in the kitchen making exquisite desserts, the coveted title is the ultimate honor, dream and obsession. The film was hailed by the Los Angeles Times as “marvelous” and led the Herald Scotland’s critic to declare, “This is the culinary ‘Hurt Locker.’”

Showing on Saturday, February 19, is Serge Bromberg’s César-winning documentary “Henri-Georges Clouzot’s Inferno.” In 1964, Clouzot, maker of such masterpieces as “Diabolique” and “The Wages of Fear,” made a hallucinatory psychological thriller about a man driven mad by jealousy. The unfinished project, “Inferno,” starred the gorgeous Romy Schneider as a water-skiing vixen and Serge Reggiani as her possessive husband. Bromberg’s film resurrects a treasure trove of footage shot by Clouzot and tells the story of how badly things can go wrong for even the most gifted directors. In Eye Weekly Jason Anderson wrote, “The glimpses of the dazzling, op-art inspired effects and Romy Scheider at her dishiest will provoke paroxysms of pleasure among cinephiles.”

The series closes on Saturday, February 26, with “The Rules of the Game,” both a comedy of manners and a scathing look at a corrupt society under the shadow of war. In “5001 Nights at the Movies,” Pauline Kael called it, “Perhaps the most influential of all French films, and one of the most richly entertaining. [Director] Jean Renoir’s legendary . . . masterpiece is a farce about a large house party, gathered for a hunt, where the servants and masters begin to chase and shoot each other. The party at the country chateau is a tragicomic world in motion.” Robert Altman famously said that “‘The Rules of the Game’ taught me the rules of the game,” and surely photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, who served as second unit director on the production, was enriched by the experience.

Film Series Schedule

Unless otherwise noted, all films begin at 8 p.m. and are screened in the Richard H. Rich Theatre. The theatre is located in the Memorial Arts Building, adjacent to the High at Peachtree and 15th Streets in midtown Atlanta. All films are in French with English subtitles. “Kings of Pastry” is in French and English with subtitles.

“Queen to Play”
Saturday, February 5

“Henri-Georges Clouzot’s Inferno”
Saturday, February 19

“Kings of Pastry”
Saturday, February 12

“The Rules of the Game”
Saturday, February 26

Support

This program is made possible with support from the Embassy of France Cultural Services department and the Consulate of France in Atlanta. 35mm projection facilities in the Rich Auditorium were provided by a gift from George Lefont.

Tickets

To purchase tickets in advance, go to www.High.org, visit the Woodruff Arts Center Box Office or call 404-733-5000. Tickets for all shows are \$7 general admission and \$6 for students, seniors and Museum members. Patron-level members enter free. Tickets may also be purchased at the door on the night of the screening.

Film Information

The public may call the High's film hotline at 404-733-4570 for up-to-the-minute information about visiting directors, receptions, changes or cancellations and a free subscription to the quarterly film calendar. The Museum's website is www.High.org.

High Museum of Art

The High Museum of Art, founded in 1905 as the Atlanta Art Association, is the leading art museum in the southeastern United States. With more than 12,000 works of art in its permanent collection, the High Museum of Art has an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American and decorative art; significant holdings of European paintings; a growing collection of African American art; and burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, photography and African art. The High is also dedicated to supporting and collecting works by Southern artists and is distinguished as the only major museum in North America to have a curatorial department specifically devoted to the field of folk and self-taught art. The High's media arts department produces acclaimed annual film series and festivals of foreign, independent and classic cinema. In November 2005, the High opened three new buildings by architect Renzo Piano that more than doubled the Museum's size, creating a vibrant "village for the arts" at the Woodruff Arts Center in Midtown Atlanta. *For more information about the High, please visit www.High.org.*

The Woodruff Arts Center

The Woodruff Arts Center is ranked among the top four arts centers in the nation. The Woodruff is unique in that it combines four visual and performing arts divisions on one campus as one not-for-profit organization. Opened in 1968, the Woodruff Arts Center is home to the Alliance Theatre, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the High Museum of Art and Young Audiences. *To learn more about the Woodruff Arts Center, please visit www.woodruffcenter.org.*

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DIGITAL IMAGES FOR THE FILMS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Media Contact:

Nicole J. Taylor

Assistant Manager of Public Relations

High Museum of Art

Tel: 404-733-4585 | E-mail: nicole.taylor@woodruffcenter.org