

27-29/03/09

REGIONAL CULTURAL CENTRE, LETTERKENNY, CO. DONEGAL

access > CINEMA

# VIEWING:SESSIONS 2009

A RESOURCE ORGANISATION FOR REGIONAL CULTURAL CINEMA EXHIBITION

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## VIEWING:SESSIONS 2009

REGIONAL CULTURAL CENTRE, LETTERKENNY, CO. DONEGAL  
27-29/03/09

- Adoration
- The Black Balloon
- Blue Eyelids
- Chéri
- Cherry Blossoms
- Everlasting Moments
- A Girl Cut in Two
- The Grocer's Son
- Heart of Fire
- Identities
- Ireland: The Tear and The Smile
- Klass
- Waveriders

Cover image taken from *Everlasting Moments*

WITH THE SUPPORT OF:



# Introduction

On behalf of the Regional Cultural Centre Letterkenny and Donegal County Council it gives me great pleasure to welcome access>CINEMA and the delegates from film societies, cinemas and arts centres around the country to Letterkenny for VIEWING:SESSIONS 09. All of the screenings on both 35mm and DVD formats will be held at the Cultural Centre, a fabulous multidisciplinary arts facility that opened in 2007.

There is a long history of film societies in Letterkenny going back over forty years. The Regional Cultural Centre and its predecessor Letterkenny Arts Centre have been involved in screening art house cinema for the last ten years, first in the old cinema on the Port Road and then in Century Cinemas prior to acquiring 35mm screening facilities. Film screenings are a central part of the Cultural Centre's programme and in addition to the regular Thursday night Spring and Autumn Film Club screenings, the Centre also recently started a monthly Saturday afternoon Kids-Flix for children over 4 years old, both in partnership with access>CINEMA.

The Centre also screens films as part of the Foyle Film Festival and the Darklight Festival's Outreach Programme. A long and close relationship with the Nerve Centre Derry has resulted in a number of film projects such as the North West Film Archive, a unique archive with over 200 individual items spanning 90 hours of digital film from Derry and Donegal. The educational strand of the NWFA has

resulted in the production of a number of youth and community films and animations. The Centre also organises film-making classes and a first Film Studies class is planned for May.

I would like to extend my appreciation to all the members who attend film at the Centre and everyone who participates in film projects. I would like to sincerely thank the staff at the Cultural Centre for making all this work possible – John M Cunningham for programming the film club, Sally Murphy Kids-Flix and film education, Ruth McCullough film and digital media, Harriet Purkis film PR, Guy Barriscale technical and projection, Dave Chernick film-maker in residence and John Canning projectionist.

We are delighted to work in partnership with access>CINEMA and to host the VIEWING:SESSIONS 09. We would particularly like to thank Maeve Cooke and the staff of access>CINEMA for the considerable work that they have put in to make this weekend possible. Finally I would like to wish everyone a wonderful weekend in Letterkenny.

**Shaun Hannigan** | DIRECTOR  
REGIONAL CULTURAL CENTRE LETTERKENNY

The last twelve months have seen some fantastic achievements for access>CINEMA and its member groups – the highlight being receiving the Europa Cinemas' "Best Entrepreneur 2008" award which represents significant recognition of the on-

going hard work and commitment by the cinemas in our network to the programming of European films. Other successes include the Japanese Film Festival, co-organised by access>CINEMA and the Embassy of Japan, and the planned installation of digital equipment in several of our venues.

But in that period we have also seen a radically changed economic landscape and as a result many transformations within the Irish cultural community. There are and will be many challenges and obstacles facing us all over the next while but as an organisation, access>CINEMA will embrace this future head-on in realistic, creative and proactive ways.

access>CINEMA's work has always been directed towards local communities. In these difficult times the value of the arts activity provided by the members has become increasingly apparent. You the members are now even more important in offering an accessible, affordable and shared social experience and cultural focus point to regional communities and audiences. Our priority will be to protect and strengthen this role and the work already done and we welcome your opinions and suggestions in that respect.

One of the challenges facing us in 2009 will be the installation of 2K digital equipment in several venues. This marks a new and exciting period both for the venues that have received grants from the Cinema Digitisation Scheme and for the network as

a whole. On Saturday, our seminar will revisit digital cinema and examine the realities of and alternatives to 2K digital cinema for regional venues.

access>CINEMA is a small team so I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues David O Mahony and Siobhan Condon whose hard work, dedication and enthusiasm contribute so much to the success of the organisation. Thanks is also due to the film distributors, filmmakers and the Irish Film Board for their continued support of VIEWING:SESSIONS. I would also like to acknowledge the Board of access>CINEMA who have been generous in giving their own time and experience to the organisation over this past year.

We are delighted to be given the opportunity to bring VIEWING:SESSIONS to the impressive Regional Cultural Centre this year and I hope that you will enjoy the surroundings and facilities here in Letterkenny. I would like to thank Shaun Hannigan, John Cunningham and the dedicated team of staff at the Regional Cultural Centre for their support of and enthusiasm for this year's event from a very early stage.

Finally, as always we acknowledge the Arts Council's ongoing support of access>CINEMA's activities and objectives.

**Maeve Cooke** | DIRECTOR  
access>CINEMA

# schedule

	35MM SCREENING ROOM MAIN AUDITORIUM, REGIONAL CULTURAL CENTRE	DVD SCREENING ROOM REGIONAL CULTURAL CENTRE	THE RADISSON HOTEL
<b>FRI 27/03/09</b>			
7.00 pm	<b>OPENING RECEPTION</b>		
8.00 pm	<i>Waveriders</i> 88 MINS		
9.30 pm	SUPPER		
10.45 pm	<i>Identities</i> 84 MINS		
<b>SAT 28/03/09</b>			
9.15 am	<i>Blue Eyelids</i> 98 MINS	<i>The Grocer's Son</i> 96 MINS	
	<b>+PLUS: Farewell Packets of Ten</b>		
11.00 am	COFFEE		
11.30 am	<i>Adoration</i> 101 MINS	<i>Klass</i> 97 MINS	
1.15 pm	LUNCH		
2.30 pm	<i>Heart of Fire</i> 92 MINS	<b>2.30 pm Seminar: Digital Cinema-Realities and Possibilities</b>	
4.00 pm	COFFEE		
4.30 pm	<i>Everlasting Moments</i> 125 MINS	<i>Cherry Blossoms</i> 122 MINS	
8.15 pm			DINNER
<b>SUN 29/03/09</b>			
9.15 am	<i>A Girl Cut in Two</i> 115 MINS	<i>Ireland: The Tear and the Smile</i> 74 MINS	
11.00 am	COFFEE		
11.30 am	<i>Chéri</i> 100 MINS	<i>The Black Balloon</i> 97 MINS	
	<b>+PLUS: Granny O'Grimm's Sleeping Beauty</b>		<b>+PLUS: Terminal Communication</b>
1.30 pm			LUNCH



## Waveriders

Ireland | 2008 | 88 minutes | English | 35mm colour | Available on 35mm and DVD

**DIRECTOR:** Joel Conroy **PRODUCER:** Margo Harkin **SCRIPT:** Joel Conroy, Lauren Davies  
**CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Daniel Trapp **EDITING:** Nathan Nugent, Douglas Moxon **MUSIC:** Various

**JOEL CONROY** (born Dublin) has worked in film and television since 1996 as a director/producer. His debut as a feature documentary director is *Waveriders* which won the Audience Award at the 2008 Dublin International Film Festival and the George Morrison Best Feature Documentary Award at the Irish Film and Television Awards in 2009.

Following the success of his previous 2003 film *Eye of the Storm*, Irish director Joel Conroy returns once again to the world of international surfing. His new film *Waveriders* provides both a well researched insight into the foundation of the sport and an exhilarating rollercoaster ride with some of sport's greatest exponents. The meticulous charting of the origins of the sport starts with an unexpected revelation that it was the son of an Ulsterman, George Freeth who re-introduced the ancient Polynesian art of wave riding in Hawaii at the start of the 20th century after it had been stamped out by missionaries. The film traces how Freeth went on to transform and popularise the sport in California where he became the world's first lifeguard.

At the core of the film is the journey of a cast of top Irish and Irish American surfers as they trace an unexpected Irish connection to surfing and strive to meet the latest challenge of big wave tow surfing in Ireland. The story brings us back to Ireland where

top surfer Richard Fitzgerald from Bundoran and UK surf champion, Gabe Davies, extol the virtues of relatively unexplored Irish surf destinations. They link up with world champion Kelly Slater and Irish American superstar surfers such as pioneering soul surfer Kevin Naughton and the renowned Malloy brothers to ride some of the most exciting surf Ireland has to offer north and south of the Irish border. The story climaxes with their attempt to ride a big wave off the west coast of Ireland using the newly introduced technique of tow surfing.

—*Dublin International Film Festival Programme 2008*

## Identities

Ireland | 2008 | 84 minutes | English | Digibeta colour and black & white | Available on Digibeta and DVD

**DIRECTOR:** Vittoria Colonna **PRODUCER:** Rachel Lysaght **SCRIPT:** Vittoria Colonna  
**CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Raja Nundlall, Tim Fleming **EDITING:** Eoin McGuirk **MUSIC:** Frank Ilfman



Premiered at the Cork Film Festival, where it was greeted with laughter, tears and warm applause, *Identities*, Vittoria Colonna's new feature-length documentary, is a sensitive and compelling documentary which explores the multicoloured, multicultural transgender community in Ireland. Five personal stories give shape to the different but parallel worlds of transvestism, transsexualism, drag, sexual identity and gender dysphoria.

Documented in a series of revealing black and white interviews, each narrative is preceded by a colour performance art piece, and more abstract self-representation. At its heart, this is a film about the human spirit and overcoming stereotype and categorisation.

— *Irish Film Institute Brochure*

**VITTORIA COLONNA** (born Dublin, 1981) trained as a fine artist in Rome's l'Accademia di Belle Arti, and as a professional actor and musical performer in Ireland's renowned Gaiety School of Acting Dublin. Using these backgrounds and experiences she has sculpted her career in film & video art as an independent director, producer and writer, with short films, documentaries and music videos. *Identities* is her first feature documentary.



## Blue Eyelids Párpados Azules

Mexico | 2007 | 98 minutes | Spanish | 35mm colour | Available on 35mm and DVD

**DIRECTOR:** Ernesto Contreras **CAST :** Cecilia Suárez, Enrique Arreola, Ana Ofelia Murgía  
**PRODUCERS:** Luis Albores, Erika Avila, Sandra Paredes **SCRIPT:** Carlos Contreras  
**CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Tonatiuh Martínez **EDITING:** Ernesto Contreras, José Manuel Craviotto **MUSIC:** Iñaki

**ERNESTO CONTRERAS** (born Mexico, 1969) graduated from the Centre of Film Studies at the Mexican National University. He has directed the short films *Sueño polaroid* (97), *Sombras que pasan* (98), *Ondas hertzianas* (99), *El milagro* (00) and *Los no invitados* (03), all winners of different national and international awards. *Párpados azules* (*Blue Eyelids*) is his first feature film.

In a remarkable feature-film debut, Ernesto Contreras gently explores solitude and the quest for love in Mexico. Marina works at a uniform factory, and one day wins an all-expense-paid trip for two from her employer – a trip to a beach paradise. Unfortunately, because of her solitude, she doesn't have anyone to invite as her guest. When Victor unexpectedly presents himself to her as an old friend from high school, she doesn't remember. But it seems that Marina does not remember anything as she quietly wanders through her daily life – as if life is passing her by without any meaning or memory.

Set in a modern Mexican megalopolis, a world filled with pale shades of blue, the film showcases Contreras's steady direction and Cecilia Suárez and Enrique Arreola's wonderful performances, which lend a quiet inertia to the film as they seek love and connectedness. Sometimes we're not quite sure if they're really lonely or want to fall in love, which is often demonstrated with great

awkwardness. But the sweetness lies in Marina and Victor's continual efforts to keep trying and seeking, which is a lesson many of us could take as we journey through our lives.

–*Sundance Film Festival Programme 2008*

+PLUS: *Farewell Packets of Ten*

**DIRECTOR:** Ken Wardrop | 2008

Ethel and Nancy have tried giving up the fags before, but haven't had much luck. The two ladies discuss the pros and cons of their mutual addictions to the dreaded weed. Produced with funding from the Irish Film Board

## The Grocer's Son Le Fils de l'épicier

France | 2007 | 96 minutes | French | DVD colour | Available on 35mm and DVD

**DIRECTOR:** Eric Guirado **CAST:** Nicolas Cazalé, Clotilde Hesme, Daniel Duval, Jeanne Goupil, Stéphan Guérin-Tillié **PRODUCERS:** Miléna Poylo, Gilles Sacuto **SCRIPT:** Eric Guirado, Florence Vignon  
**CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Laurent Brunet **EDITING:** Pierre Haberer **MUSIC:** Christophe Boutin



Director Eric Guirado's *The Grocer's Son* is a small, self-assured film that moves at its own pace, always staying one graceful step ahead of its reluctant protagonist.

City boy Antoine (Nicolas Cazalé from *Le Grand Voyage*) has a built-in curl to his lip and a sleek, dark velvet brow; resentment is the air he breathes, and so when the source of it – his father, a rural grocer – is felled by a heart attack, it takes some serious guilt-tripping to draw him back into the family business in the French countryside.

Accompanied to the family homestead by a burgeoning crush named Claire (*Regular Lovers'* Clotilde Hesme), Antoine picks up his father's grocery route and immediately alienates the locals with his brusque, patronizing airs. Claire gives him some lessons in the human touch, and is rewarded with a sabotaging dose of Antoine's aspirational complex; he wants to keep her expectations below par, even as he

loathes his father for similar treatment. Guirado's story – as humble as the old folks here who can make a day out of purchasing an aubergine – is inflected with immense emotion, mining the quotidian for its deeper charms and exploring how the individuals in a family dynamic shape and reshape each other. As Antoine slowly reassimilates into the family and community, his gradual comfort in being needed suggests one definition of adulthood: when rebellion against routine gives way to respect for tradition.

–*Michelle Orange, The Village Voice*

**ERIC GUIRADO** (born Lyon, France, 1968) started his filmmaking career by writing and directing short films including the award winning *Un Petit Air de Fete* (99) and *Je suis un super héros* (00). His feature debut *Quand Tu Descendras du Ciel* (03) was met with critical acclaim. *The Grocer's Son* is his second feature.



## Adoration

Canada | 2008 | 101 minutes | English | 35mm colour | Available on 35mm

**DIRECTOR:** Atom Egoyan **CAST:** Arsinée Khanjian, Scott Speedman, Rachel Blanchard, Noam Jenkins, Devon Bostick **PRODUCERS:** Atom Egoyan, Simon Urdl, Jennifer Weiss **SCRIPT:** Atom Egoyan **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Paul Sarossy **EDITING:** Susan Shipton **MUSIC:** Mychael Danna

**ATOM EGOYAN** (born Cairo, 1960) studied international relations and classical guitar at the University of Toronto. In addition to filmmaking, he has created works for the theatre and for interdisciplinary art installations, including his piece *Auroras*, which was part of the 2007 Luminato Festival in Toronto. His films, many of which have received several of the cinema's most prestigious awards, are *Next of Kin* (84), *Family Viewing* (87), *Speaking Parts* (89), *The Adjuster* (91), *Calendar* (93), *Exotica* (94), *The Sweet Hereafter* (97), *Felicia's Journey* (99), *Krapp's Last Tape* (00), *Ararat* (02), *Where the Truth Lies* (05) and *Adoration* (08).

Each new Atom Egoyan film invites reflection, but *Adoration* provokes new debates, furthering the themes of his nearly twenty-five-year body of work. Urgent, elegant and simmering with ideas, this is a fugue for our age of terror and shifting identities.

When his high-school French class is asked to translate a news article about a terrorist who planted a bomb in his pregnant girlfriend's luggage, Simon (Devon Bostick) starts digging into his own family's murky past. His resulting claims about the deaths of his father Sami (Noam Jenkins) and mother Rachel (Rachel Blanchard) stir up a storm that splashes over the edges of his own life and into communities both local and virtual. Bringing full teenaged confusion and self-righteousness to the crisis he helped create, Simon lives with his well-meaning, struggling uncle Tom (Scott Speedman), but increasingly shuts him out, opening up instead to his mysterious French teacher Sabine (Arsinée Khanjian).

With *Adoration*, his twelfth feature, Egoyan lays out themes of technology, terrorism and fear, using them as a composer employs sections of an orchestra, bringing different tones and textures to the fore and into conversation with one another. In one bravura sequence, an online community exchanges opinions about violence and victimhood, its many faces and voices mingling in a searing chorus of pain. Years after *Family Viewing*, *Speaking Parts* and *The Sweet Hereafter*, this Canadian master has returned to explore the fractured ground of human communication and self-presentation, but with a cinematic language that has grown even richer. *Adoration* shows Egoyan grappling with how to live amidst fear and uncertainty. It stands among his very best work.

–Cameron Bailey, *Toronto International Film Festival Programme 2008*



## Klass

Estonia | 2007 | 97 minutes | Estonian | DVD colour | Available on DVD

**DIRECTOR:** Ilmar Raag **CAST:** Vallo Kirs, Pärt Uusberg, Paula Solvak, Margus Prangel, Tiina Rebane **PRODUCER:** Riina Sildos **SCRIPT:** Ilmar Raag **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Kristjan-Jaak Nuudi **EDITING:** Tambet Tuisk **MUSIC:** Timo Steiner, Paul Oja, Martin "Eskimo" Kallasvee

Introvert Joosep is the butt of crude jokes from his classmates who are irritated by his taciturn nature. The only support he has comes from Kaspar, whom he sits next to in class. Anders, the leader of a gang, steps up his behaviour towards both boys, taking things beyond the limits of human dignity. After a particularly repulsive incident, Joosep and Kaspar decide it's time to take action. Things will never be the same again...

The film is divided into seven chapters and takes place in an anonymous Estonian secondary school. This isn't a sociological probe into the theme of adolescent bullying which might turn violently against the perpetrators, but more a universal reflection on the darker sides of the human soul, often hidden beneath an attractive exterior, ready to provoke an unexpected reaction under excess pressure. The acting performances of the leads, in particular, give the story – a linear progression where silly pranks develop into a tragic outcome – a highly credible dimension.

–*Karlovy Vary International Film Festival Programme 2007*

**ILMAR RAAG** (born Estonia, 1968) studied in Paris and Ohio, USA, and debuted in 1998 with the film *Killing Tartu (Tappev Tartu)*. In 2005 he made the television film *August 1991* and, two years later, *Klass (The Class)* which was awarded the Europa Cinemas Label at the 2007 Karlovy Vary International Film Festival.



## Heart of Fire Feuerherz

Germany, Italy, Austria, France | 2008 | 92 minutes | Tigrigna | 35mm colour | Available on 35mm and DVD

**DIRECTOR:** Luigi Falorni **CAST:** Letekidan Micael, Solomie Micael, Seble Tilahun **PRODUCERS:** Andreas Bareiß, Bernd Burgemeister, Sven Burgemeister, Gloria Burkert **SCRIPT:** Luigi Falorni, Gabriele Kister **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Judith Kaufmann **EDITING:** Anja Pohl **MUSIC:** Andrea Guerra, Stephan Massimo

**LUIGI FALORNI** (born Florence, Italy, 1971) studied film directing at Cooperativa Schermobianco in Florence from 1990-92 and in 1994, continued his studies at the Munich College of Television and Film where he majored in Documentary and Cinematography. In 2003 he graduated with the documentary, *The Story of the Weeping Camel*, which won a variety of international awards and was nominated in 2005 for an Oscar. *Heart of Fire* is his first feature-length drama.

Italian director Luigi Falorni has shown a real knack for cinema that brings far-off places to life, while smudging the line between documentary and fiction. *The Story of the Weeping Camel* (2003) employed writing and sure-footed direction yet retained the feel of untreated reality throughout. *Heart of Fire* has that same hallmark. It's a child's eye view of war, based on a memoir by Eritrean-born singer Senait G. Mehari, who grew up during her home country's 1980s struggle for independence from Ethiopia.

In *Heart of Fire*, Mehari becomes sweet-natured, spontaneous Awet, a curious 10-year-old. Her journey takes her first from a Catholic nunnery to living with her demanding Dad in an area of Eritrea liberated by the independence movement. Dad soon passes her on again, this time sent with her sister, to fight with the liberation army as the 'daughters of Eritrea.' Awet questions all she sees and asks why, if both sides look the same, they're engaged in such pointless fighting.

*Heart of Fire* is moving, humanist filmmaking, yet it has sparked fury in some quarters. The Eritrean government maintains that no child soldiers were used in the conflict and during filming the cast was harassed by government supporters to the point where Falorni had to recast the entire film. He found Eritrean refugees in a camp in Kenya, and with them the ring of authenticity that he was searching for all along. Awet, played by real-life refugee Micael, carries *Heart of Fire* and attracts high praise for her debut from Screen International: "Bold, brazen and big-haired, Letekidan Micael gives one of those memorable child performances... We can only hope to see her on screen again."

– Maria Wallace, *Bradford International Film Festival* 2009

## Everlasting Moments Maria Larssons Eviga Ögonblick

Denmark, Sweden | 2008 | 125 minutes | Swedish | Digibeta colour | Available on 35mm and DVD

**DIRECTOR:** Jan Troell **CAST:** Maria Heiskanen, Mikael Persbrandt, Jesper Christensen **PRODUCER:** Thomas Stenderup **SCRIPT:** Niklas Rådström, Jan Troell, Agneta Ulfsäter Troell **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Mischa Gavrjusjov **EDITING:** Niels Pagh Andersen **MUSIC:** Matti Bye

In 1907, Maria Larsson (Heiskanen) already has four children with her rough-hewn husband Sigge (Persbrandt), who can't resist getting storming drunk and sometimes throws Maria around as a result. But her deep-held faith prohibits her from leaving him, and from using contraception, so their family continues to grow. And she only survives due to the inadvertent discovery of a camera she had won years earlier and learns to use thanks to a generous photographer (Christensen). As Maria develops her gift for capturing moments on film, she also learns to stand up for herself.

The story is narrated by Maria's eldest daughter Maja as a reminiscence of her mother's profound impact on the family. As a result, the film has a heavy sense of nostalgia, which is emphasised by director Troell's elegant camera work and sun-drenched, earth-tone colour palette. But within this superbly sure-handed filmmaking style are characters who bristle with real life: flawed, unpredictable and, most importantly,

held strongly together by the bond of family, even though they don't always get along. Heiskanen anchors the film vividly as a woman who has a fierce spark of independence and a real talent for seeing the world around her through a camera lens.

Troell approaches these big themes with a gentle, thoughtful and warmly humorous tone, never generating much energy but keeping us gripped through insight, strong characters and a clever examination of the power of both the imagination and the image. At age 77, Troell is one of the masters of world cinema. He knows the power of a good story, and isn't afraid to let it develop in its own time.

–Rich Cline, *Shadows on the Wall*



**JAN TROELL** (born Malmö, Sweden, 1931) initially worked as a cameraman for director Bo Widerberg, and often works as cinematographer on his own films. His filmography includes *Here's Your Life* (66), *Who Saw Him Die?* (68), *The Emigrants* (71), for which he was nominated for Academy Awards® for both best direction and best adapted screenplay, *The New Land* (72), *Il Capitano* (91), *Hamsun* (96), *As White as in Snow* (01), *Presence* (03) and *Everlasting Moments* (08).



## Cherry Blossoms – Hanami Kirschblüten – Hanami

Germany | 2008 | 122 mins | German | DVD colour | Available on Digibeta and DVD

**DIRECTOR:** Doris Dörrie **CAST:** Elmar Wepper, Hannelore Elsner, Aya Irizuki, Nadja Uhl, Maximilian Brückner, Birgit Minichmayr **PRODUCERS:** Harald Kügler, Molly von Fürstenberg **SCRIPT:** Doris Dörrie **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Hanno Lentz **EDITING:** Frank C. Müller, Inez Regnier **MUSIC:** Claus Bantzer

**DORIS DÖRRIE** (born Hanover, 1955) studied acting and film at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California, and philosophy and psychology in New York in New York. From 1975 to 1978 she studied at the College of Television and Film in Munich, where she later lectured. After several TV films, she made her first feature film in 1983. She enjoyed outstanding success with her 1985 film *Männer*. A well-known author of novels, short stories and children's books, in 2001 and 2003 respectively she directed productions of *Cosi fan tutte*, and *Turandot* for the Berliner Staatsoper.

Trudi (Hannelore Eisner) has always longed to go to Japan. As *Cherry Blossoms* opens, she is told that her husband (Elmar Wepper) is terminally ill. It's agonisingly painful for her, yet she chooses not to tell him, to preserve his enjoyment of life. She takes the burden entirely upon herself, sparing their children too, as she has sought to do throughout her life.

Yet, whilst she acknowledges that the children – with their own lives and families and very different concerns – are increasingly strangers – there are things she fails to understand about her husband, too. Things that will lead him to undertake a strange journey and a path to understanding quite outside the bounds of his mundane Bavarian lifestyle. Through an unlikely friendship with a Japanese teenager (Aya Irizuki) his view of the world will be completely changed.

*Cherry Blossoms* is a film about death and a film about grief, yet it is also a film about how easily we can fail to understand one another, and how love, if it is to prosper, must take that in its stride.

Exquisitely made, this gentle, intelligent film is full of warm humour. It's a piece of work in which every detail counts, every shot beautifully framed and lit. *Cherry Blossoms* invites us to slow down and discover the hidden layers of meaning in our own lives. It requires and solicits a certain generosity of spirit and an openness to experience, but what it offers in return is something remarkable.

– Jennie Kermode, *Eye For Film*

## A Girl Cut in Two La Fille coupée en deux

France, Germany | 2007 | 115 minutes | French | 35mm colour | Available on 35mm and DVD

**DIRECTORS:** Claude Chabrol **CAST:** Ludivine Sagnier, Benoît Magimel, François Berléand, Valeria Cavalli, Mathilda May **PRODUCER:** Patrick Godeau **SCRIPT:** Cécile Maistre, Claude Chabrol **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Eduardo Serra **EDITING:** Monique Fardoulis **MUSIC:** Matthieu Chabrol



Claude Chabrol has been at the top of his game for so many years we're beginning to suspect it's not a game after all but serious, wicked sport. *A Girl Cut in Two* has a contemporary setting (almost all his films do) but a period mood; we can feel the ghost of Stendhal in the entrenched class warfare (or is it class trench-warfare?) at play as Chabrol moves his characters around an exquisite social setting.

François Berléand stars as a jaded novelist and too happily married ladies man whose latest conquest is poor but honest TV weathergirl Gabrielle Deneige (Ludivine Sagnier). At once naïve and unstoppable, Gabrielle doesn't need to be convinced to enter into a sordid May-September relationship with a celebrated member of the intelligentsia. However, tugging at her other arm with the pull of the entire haute bourgeoisie is young Paul (Benoît Magimel), the cute but dangerously schizophrenic scion of a Lyon pharmaceutical magnate. What's a girl to do?

Chabrol solves the problem in his usual methodical way, ending with a set piece worthy of Guy Maddin. Appropriately, the story takes as its starting point a famous Gilded Age crime of passion, the murder of Madison Square Garden architect and notorious womanizer Stanford White.

– Judy Bloch, *San Francisco International Film Festival 2008*

**CLAUDE CHABROL** (born Paris, 1930) was invited to contribute to the Cahiers du Cinéma after he met Eric Rohmer, Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut at post-Liberation ciné-clubs in Paris. His films include *Le Beau Serge* (58), *Les Cousins* (59), which won the Golden Bear at the the Berlin International Film Festival, *Les Bonnes Femmes* (60), *Les Biches* (68), *Le Boucher* (69), *Les Noces rouges* (73), *Violette Nozière* (78), *Masques* (87), *Une Affaire des femmes* (88), *La Cérémonie* (95), *Au coeur du mensonge* (98), *Le Démoniste* (04) and *La Fille coupée en deux* (07).



## Ireland: The Tear and The Smile

USA, UK | 1961 | 74 minutes | DVD | Black & white and colour | Available on DVD



**DIRECTORS:** Willard Van Dyke and Peter Bryan

**WILLARD VAN DYKE** (born USA, 1906) started his career as a stills photographer, earning acclaim for his portraits of migrant workers. He entered filmmaking as the co-photographer of Pare Lorentz's celebrated history of the Mississippi Basin, *The River* (37). Other notable works of his include *The City* (39), *Valley Town* (40), *San Francisco* (45) and *Skyscraper* (58), for which he received an Oscar nomination. Between 1961 and 1965 he directed the award-winning television series *The Twentieth Century* (61-65), which included the two episodes entitled *Ireland: The Tear and the Smile*. He served as director of the Museum of Modern Art's film department from 1965 to 1973.

**PETER BRYAN** (born UK) worked as a screenwriter and director under the Hammer Film Productions label. He directed the documentaries *The Seven Wonders of Ireland* (58), *Operation Universe* (59) and *Sportsman's Paradise* (63).

### IRELAND : THE TEAR AND THE SMILE (1961, 2 x 27 mins)

Designed to introduce American television audiences to contemporary Irish society, *Ireland: The Tear and the Smile* aimed to provide an accurate picture of everyday life in Ireland in 1960. Presented by TV luminary, Walter Cronkite and written by Irish novelist, Elizabeth Bowen the programme featured contributions from leading political and literary figures – President, Eamon de Valera, Taoiseach, Seán Lemass, Seán O Faolain, Siobhan McKenna, Brendan Behan, Nora Connolly O'Brien, and Sybil Connolly. The interviews were punctuated with images of urban and rural life, Dublin pub scenes, gambling, hardship in the west of Ireland, and harrowing scenes of emigration.

Upon broadcast in early 1961, the programmes were met with disapproval by Irish diplomats in the US who argued that they presented "a poverty-stricken

country riddled with back-wardness, unemployment and emigration". A misleading distortion of a modern, progressive nation or a valuable, critical reflection on an economically and politically challenged society? We invite you to judge.

### O HARA'S HOLIDAY (1961, 20 mins)

In this vividly shamrock-tinted Hammer Film Productions' short, designed to attract American tourists to Ireland, vacationing New York cop, O'Hara (Herbert Mulhoun) is delighted to find not only his roots but the beautiful young Kitty (Antoinette Lawlor) in Ireland. Along with his "American" friends Bill, (Tom Irwin) and Ann (Anna Manahan), they enjoy the beauty spots of the Irish countryside and the hotspots of Dublin nightlife.

## Chéri

UK, Germany | 2009 | 100 minutes | English | 35mm colour | Available on 35mm and DVD

**DIRECTOR:** Stephen Frears **CAST :** Michelle Pfeiffer, Kathy Bates, Rupert Friend, Felicity Jones **PRODUCERS:** Andras Hamori, Tracey Seaward, Thom Mount **SCRIPT:** Christopher Hampton, based on the novel by Colette **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Darius Khondji **EDITING:** Lucia Zuchetti **MUSIC:** Alexandre Desplat



Based on the 1920 novel by Colette, *Chéri* is a tragicomic love story set in early 20th-century Paris, during the twilight of the "Belle Époque". Pfeiffer plays Léa de Lonval, a veteran courtesan who is long past "un certain age" and considering retirement. To help a former colleague and rival, Madame Peloux (Kathy Bates), Léa agrees to spend a few weeks dispensing womanly wisdom to Peloux's 19-year-old playboy son Fred, aka Chéri (Rupert Friend).

But their harmless fling blossoms into a full-blown romance that surprises everyone, not least the lovers themselves. Six years of quasi-marital bliss pass, until the Machiavellian Peloux arranges for Chéri to marry the daughter of another courtesan. His tortuous separation with Léa follows, leading to bitter confrontation and botched reconciliation.

Frears handles this slow shift from romantic frolic to mournful elegy with a pleasingly light touch. Hampton's crisp screenplay keeps it lively with a steady flow of dry quips and acerbic one-liners. Pfeiffer's performance is magnetic and subtle, her worldly nonchalance a mask for vulnerability and heartache.

Frears and his team shake off the stagey cobwebs that often clutter period drama by shooting in airy Art Nouveau interiors ablaze with silks, brocades and pearls. The film's palette is a pastel-heavy mix of lavender and sepia, eggshell blues and lightly rouged flesh tones, evoking the retro charm of colourised Victorian postcards.

–Stephen Dalton, *The Times*

**STEPHEN FREARS** (born Leicester, England, 1941) was educated in Norfolk and Cambridge. An assistant director to Karel Reisz, he spent the seventies working as a prolific and extremely versatile television director. The few theatrical releases he made during this time include the comic thriller, *Gumshoe* (71), with Albert Finney. His 1985 film *My Beautiful Laundrette* followed by *Prick Up Your Ears* (87) and the award winning *Dangerous Liaisons* (88) secured his international breakthrough. In 1999 he won a Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival for *The Hi-Lo Country*. His recent feature films include *Dirty Pretty Things* (02), *Mrs. Henderson Presents* (05) and *The Queen* (06)

**+PLUS:** *Granny O'Grimm's Sleeping Beauty*

**WRITER:** Nicky Phelan | 2008

Granny O'Grimm, a seemingly sweet old lady, loses the plot as she tells her version of Sleeping Beauty to her terrified granddaughter. From the Irish Film Board's *Frameworks* collection



## The Black Balloon

Australia | 2008 | 97 minutes | English | DVD colour | Anamorphic widescreen | Available on DVD

**DIRECTOR:** Elissa Down **CAST :** Rhys Wakefield, Gemma Ward, Luke Ford, Toni Collette  
**PRODUCERS:** Tristram Miall **SCRIPT:** Elissa Down, Jimmy The Exploder  
**CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Denson Baker **EDITING:** Veronica Jenet **MUSIC:** Michael Yezerki

**ELISSA DOWN** (born New South Wales, Australia, 1975) studied art at Curtin University in Perth. Her major short works comprise a number of acclaimed films: *Aged Fourteen* (00), *Pink Pyjamas* (01), *Her Outback* (02), *The Bathers* (02), *The Cherry Orchard* (03), and *Summer Angst* (04). Both in 1999 and 2000 Down was nominated for Young Film-maker of the year at the Western Australian Screen Awards. *The Black Balloon* is her first feature.

Thomas is about to turn sixteen and start yet another new school but his problems are a little more complex than just being the new boy. His older brother Charlie is autistic and suffers from ADHD, so Thomas is often forced to be more keeper than playmate to him. And with their mother under doctor's orders to rest in her final months of pregnancy, Thomas' responsibilities to look after his brother are only increasing.

*The Black Balloon* handles Thomas' resentment of his helpless elder brother, a selfish but very human reaction, with no little skill and sympathy, thanks to a sensitive script and a great performance by Rhys Wakefield. Toni Collette, meanwhile, turns in a fine, measured performance as the boys' mother, Maggie, struggling to cope with the vicissitudes of life in suburbia as the conflict between her two sons threatens to tear her family apart. Playing Thomas' first love Jackie, Gemma Ward – whom director Elissa Downs cast in her first film role in 2001's *Pink Pyjamas*, and who is far better known as a model than

actress – brings a sweetness to proceedings which balances the harsh realities elsewhere in the film.

So often films featuring characters with learning disabilities are either over-sentimental or overly tragic but here, there is an irrepressible joy for this family, who just get on with life. Charlie's physical strength and wilful determination are both challenging and potentially threatening (scenes between Charlie and Thomas' girlfriend are deliberately tense) but this is essentially a hopeful and optimistic story where love and kindness can tame, or at least restrain.

– *Edinburgh Film Festival Programme 2008.*

**+PLUS:** *Terminal Communication*

**WRITER** | **DIRECTOR:** Michael Fortune | 2008

This fixed-frame film features the action of drivers as they approach a badly signed junction leading into Rosslare Harbour ferry port, in County Wexford. The camera captures the incidents which local's claim is an everyday occurrence.

## Seminar: Digital Cinema – Realities and Possibilities

**SATURDAY MARCH 28 2.30PM:** Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny

Back in 2006, access>CINEMA presented a discussion about Digital Cinema and at last year's **VIEWING: SESSIONS** the Arts Council launched the Cultural Cinema Consortium's report *Digital Cinema in Ireland: A review of current possibilities*. With the announcement of the Cultural Cinema Consortium's Digitisation Scheme in September 2008, the 2K digital future is finally becoming a reality for venues that offer a cultural cinema programme on a year-round basis.

Over the next few months several venues on the access>CINEMA circuit will make the transition to digital through grants awarded by the Cinema Digitisation Scheme. This session on Saturday, March 28 at 2.30pm in the Regional Cultural Centre will revisit the discussion surrounding digital cinema and highlight the current situation for specialised film in particular.

A panel consisting of Fionnuala Sweeney, Head of Film with the Arts Council; Ron Inglis, Director, Regional Screen Scotland and Maeve Cooke, Director, access>CINEMA will not only discuss the implications and opportunities for venues who will install 2K digital in the near future, but will also explore the possible alternatives for venues without 2K digital capability who still wish to provide a higher quality cinema experience for regional audiences

## The *Insight* Project

access>cinema is proud to announce the pilot phase of the *Insight* project. The *Insight* Project is a joint not-for-profit venture between Irish company Hello Camera (hellocamera.ie) and Staffordshire University designed to give film club members a greater insight into the world of cultural cinema. This will be achieved by screening a pre-prepared 5 minute introduction to each film on DVD prior to the main film being screened. So, for example, if you choose the film *Klass* to be the next film at your local club, you can play the 5 minute *Insight* DVD prior to the main feature which will hopefully give some context to the film, its director, its production etc. These presentations will be given by academic film staff from Staffordshire University and will then be distributed by Hello Camera through access>cinema.

As this project is still at pilot phase, we'd love to hear your thoughts on improvements or changes you'd make to our test *Insight* DVD. Feel free to talk with James Fair from Staffordshire University or Gary Hctor from Hello Camera who'll be here all weekend and are awaiting your feedback.

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	REPLIES	A	B	C	D	E	REACTION METER
Adoration							
The Black Balloon							
Blue Eyelids							
Chéri							
Cherry Blossoms							
Everlasting Moments							
A Girl Cut in Two							
The Grocer's Son							
Heart of Fire							
Identities							
Ireland: The Tear and The Smile							
Klass							
Waveriders							

A = Excellent | B = Very Good | C = Good | D = Fair | E = Poor

2002: No Man's Land 2003: Secretary 2004: The Story of the Weeping Camel 2005: The Consequences of Love 2006: Fateless 2007: The Lives of Others 2008: Emma's Bliss

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