FILM CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 8 - APRIL 4, 2019

TRANSIT
A Christian Petzold Film
Opens March 15

CATVIDEOFEST
FEVERARY
16, 17 & 19

RUBEN BRANDT, COLLECTOR
OPENS MARCH 1

THE FILMS OF HARMONY KORINE
MARCH 15-21

CHRISTIAN PETZOLD MATINEE SERIES
WEEKENDS AT 11:30AM

IDA LUPINO’S THE HITCH-HIKER
MARCH 4 AT 7PM

Chicago’s Year-Round Film Festival
3733 N. Southport Avenue, Chicago
www.musicboxtheatre.com 773.871.6607
Welcome to the Music Box Theatre!

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Application Due Dates
May 15, 2019 (Start Fall 2019: Aug. 19, 2019)
September 15, 2019 (Start Winter 2020: Jan. 6, 2020)

Music Box Theatre     3733 North Southport     musicboxtheatre.com
773-871-6604 showtimes: 773-871-6607 office
**THE OSCAR-NOMINATED DOCUMENTARY SHORT FILMS**

For the 14th consecutive year, Shorts HD and Magnolia Pictures present the Oscar-Nominated Documentary Short Films, opening in Chicago exclusively at the Music Box Theatre. A collection of powerful and diverse real-life stories, the Documentary Shorts routinely highlight lesser-heard voices from around the globe. This is your annual chance to predict the winners (and have the edge in your Oscar pool)! A perennial hit with audiences around the country and the world, don’t miss this year’s selection of shorts. The Academy Awards take place Sunday, Feb. 24.

**COLD WAR**

**DIRECTED BY:** Pawel Pawlikowski  
**STARRING:** Joanna Kulig, Tomasz Kot  
2018, 89 mins, DCP, In Polish with English subtitles

COLD WAR is a passionate love story between a man and a woman who meet in the ruins of post-war Poland. With vastly different backgrounds and temperaments, they are fatefully mismatched and yet condemned to each other. Set against the background of the Cold War in 1950s Poland, Berlin, Yugoslavia and Paris, it’s the tale of a couple separated by politics, character flaws and unfortunate twists of fate—an impossible love story in impossible times.

“A terrific, smoky-cool love story.”  
—TIME

“Visually stunning, passionate, wistful, and thoughtful in equal measure.”  
—Vulture

**NOW PLAYING**

Winner - Best Director - 2018 Cannes Film Festival

**CANDYALITY and the MUSIC BOX A SOUTHPORT TRADITION**

**FEATURES AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

**NOW PLAYING**

**FEATURE FILM**

Nominated for 3 Academy Awards, including Best Director!

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**AMONG WOLVES**

**DIRECTED BY:** Shawn Convey  
2019, 95 mins, DCP, In Croatian with English subtitles

The Wolves are no ordinary biker club as revealed in this gorgeously shot, surprisingly intimate documentary of trauma and hope. Still struggling from the aftermath of the Bosnian War, this multi-ethnic club organizes charity for their small mountain town and defends the threatened herd of wild horses they first met on the frontline. Out there, with the horses, they confront their past and reclaim that territory as a space for healing.

Come celebrate the official release of this stunning debut by Chicago filmmaker Shawn Convey (in attendance for all screenings). Panel discussions, special events, comp night for veterans and more TBA.

"builds an arresting power."  
—RogerEbert.com

**NEVER LOOK AWAY**

**DIRECTED BY:** Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck  
STARRING: Tom Schilling, Sebastian Koch, Paula Beer  
2018, 189 mins, DCP, In German & Russian with English subtitles

Inspired by real events and spanning three eras of German history, NEVER LOOK AWAY tells the story of a young art student, Kurt (Tom Schilling) who falls in love with fellow student, Ellie (Paula Beer). Ellie’s father, Professor Seeband (Sebastian Koch), a famous doctor, is dismayed at his daughter’s choice of boyfriend, and vows to destroy the relationship. What neither of them knows is that their lives are already connected through a terrible crime Seeband committed decades ago.

"An epic, intergenerational tale of art, love, tragedy, and politics."  
—Variety

"A gorgeous example of provocative storytelling. See it!"  
—The Boston Herald

**CASABLANCA with Sweetheart Sing-Along**

Sunday, February 10 at 2pm  
**DIRECTED BY:** Michael Curtiz  
**STARRING:** Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Paul Henreid  
(1942) 102 mins, 35mm

The Music Box Theatre’s annual screening of the classic film CASABLANCA begins with a special "Valentine’s Day Sweetheart Sing-Along" featuring a selection of favorite love songs complete with projected lyrics and accompaniment from the Music Box organ. Songs include “You Are My Sunshine,” “Bicycle Built for Two” and “Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off.” After the sing-a-long you and your sweetheart can hold hands, canoodle and watch Bogart and Bergman in the timeless CASABLANCA, one of the great romantic films of all time.

**THE PRINCESS BRIDE**

2 Shows! Wednesday, February 13 & Thursday, February 14 at 7pm  
**DIRECTED BY:** Rob Reiner  
**STARRING:** Cary Elwes, Mandy Patinkin, Robin Wright  
(1987) 98 minutes, DCP

The fairy tale that puts the “comedy” in “romantic comedy.” Featuring pre-show entertainment that includes a costume contest. Dress up as the dashing Inigo Montoya, the beautiful Buttercup, the gentle Fezzik, or any of your other favorite characters!

A young boy listens while his grandfather reads him the adventures of Buttercup, the most beautiful woman in the world, and Westly, the man she loves, in the fairy-tale kingdom of Florin. Along the way they encounter a Spanish swordsman, a gentle giant, and the six-fingered villain, Count Rugen. Inconceivable!
**Features and Special Events**

**FEBRUARY 15 & 16**

**AUDITION**

**DIRECTED BY:** Takashi Miike  
**STARRING:** Ryo Ishibashi, Eihi Shiina  
**YEAR:** 1999, 115 mins, DCP; In Japanese with English subtitles  

One of the most well-crafted, impactful and infamous J-horror films ever made returns to the big screen after far too long a break.

Recent widower Shigeharu is advised by his son to find a new wife. On the advice of a film company colleague, they stage “auditions” for a new girlfriend that masquerade as an acting job. Shigeharu becomes enchanted with Asami: a spooky twentysomething responsive to his charms. But this is no ordinary FATAL ATTRACTION-style thriller, for it carefully pulls the audience through a wrenching exploration of deep male fears and the stereotype of submissive Japanese women.

**FEBRUARY 16, 17 & 19**

**CATVIDEOFEST**

**Saturday, February 16 & Sunday, February 17 at Noon**  
**Tuesday, February 19 at 7pm**

CatVideoFest returns to the Music Box! 70 minutes of the best cat videos of the year, plus some classics and surprises.

CatVideoFest is a charitable nonprofit dedicated to bringing the joy of cat videos to the masses and raising money for cats in need. Each year, curator Will Braden creates a program of the best cat videos of the year, along with some classics and unique submissions. Ticket sales for CatVideoFest go toward local cat charities, animal welfare organizations, and shelters.

**OPENS FEBRUARY 22**

**LORDS OF CHAOS**

**DIRECTED BY:** Jonas Åkerlund  
**STARRING:** Rory Culkin, Emory Cohen, Sky Ferreira, Jack Kilmer  
**YEAR:** 2018, 112 mins, DCP

Based on an astonishing true story, LORDS OF CHAOS recounts the exploits of the Norwegian black metal movement’s most notorious band: Mayhem. Its founder, Øystein Aarseth, better known as Euronymous, was one of the originators of the annihilating metal guitar sound that burst onto the scene in the early ’90s. After the gruesome suicide of vocalist Per Yngve Ohlin, who performed under the pseudonym “Dead,” Euronymous used the opportunity to inject a mix of satanism, havoc, and murder into the music to sell more records.

**FEBRUARY 16, 17 & 19**

**RUBEN BRANDT, COLLECTOR**

**DIRECTED BY:** Milorad Kristić  
**STARRING:** Iván Kamarás, Gabriella Hámori, Csaba Márton  
**YEAR:** 2018, 94 mins, DCP

Ruben Brandt, a famous psychotherapist, is forced to steal 13 paintings from the world’s renowned museums and private collections to prevent his suffering from terrible nightmares he has as a result of subliminal messaging he received as a child. Accompanied by his four patients, he and his band of thieves strike regularly and with great success: the Louvre, Tate, Uffizi, Hermitage, the Museum of Modern Art.

“The Collector” quickly becomes the most wanted criminal in the world. Gangsters and headhunters chase him around the world while the reward for his capture keeps rising, approaching a hundred million dollars. A cartel of insurance companies entrusts Mike Kowalski, a private detective and leading expert on art theft, to solve the “Collector Case.”

“Funny and vicious… a compulsively watchable jam”  
– BirthMoviesDeath

“A pitch-perfect black metal dramedy about real-life headbangers who lost their minds.”  
– Variety

“A magnificent achievement.”  
– Cineuropa

“Joyously wild.”  
– Los Angeles Times

READ ANDREA GRONVALL’S COMMENTARY ON PAGE 18
BIRDS OF PASSAGE

DIRECTED BY: Cristina Gallego, Ciro Guerra
STARRING: José Acosta, Natalia Reyes, Carmiña Martínez
2019, 125 mins, DCP, In Spanish with English subtitles

Set in 1970s Colombia among the Wayúu indigenous people, BIRDS OF PASSAGE is a mystical epic centering on Rapayet, a man torn between the desire to be powerful and his duty to uphold his culture’s values. Ignoring ancient omens, his tribe enters the drug trafficking business getting caught up in a conflict where honor is the highest currency and debts are paid with blood.

“A beautifully crafted, slow-burn crime saga steeped in native traditions.”
—The Hollywood Reporter

“A visually stunning and often surprising true story...”
—Variety

THE HITCH-HIKER

Monday, March 4 at 7pm
(Ida Lupino, 1953, 71 mins, DCP)

The first film noir directed by a woman was also among the most unsettling movies of its era. And it’s lost none of its potency today. Inspired by the true-life murder spree of Billy Cook, THE HITCH-HIKER is the tension-laden saga of two men on a camping trip (Edmond O’Brien and Frank Lovejoy) who are held captive by a homicidal drifter (William Talman). Renegade filmmaking at its finest, THE HITCH-HIKER was independently produced, which allowed Lupino and ex-husband/producer Collier Young to work from a treatment by blacklisted writer Daniel Mainwaring, and tackle an incident that was too brutal for the major studios to even consider.

Introduced by Elizabeth Weitzman, author of the new history Renegade Women in Film & TV (published by Clarkson Potter), with book signing after the film.

PARTS OF SPEECH: HARI KUNZRU

Presented by the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago
Tuesday March 12 at 7:30 pm

With faith in public and private institutions at an all-time low, what kinds of speeches—and speakers—are likely to win trust, acquire authority, and mobilize audiences? As part of the exhibition Parts of Speech at the MCA Chicago, journalist Hari Kunzru uses the historic Music Box Theatre to consider truth and distortion in public address.

In the 1930s, Bertolt Brecht published “Five Difficulties in Writing the Truth,” asserting that writers must be able to recognize, proclaim, and weaponize the truth, disseminating to those “in whose hands it will become effective.” Kunzru will respond to Brecht’s essay by considering today’s greatest difficulties in writing the truth, including the proliferation of distortions, misinformation, and harassment campaigns.

Parts of Speech will be on view at the MCA Chicago from January 22 through June 9, 2019. For more information, visit mcachicago.org.
TRANSIT

DIRECTED BY: Christian Petzold
STARRING: Franz Rogowski, Paula Beer
2018, 101 mins, DCP; In French with English subtitles

In Christian Petzold’s brilliant and haunting modern-day adaptation of Anna Seghers’s 1942 novel, Transit Visa, Georg, a German refugee (Franz Rogowski, HAPPY END), flees to Marseille assuming the identity of a recently deceased writer whose papers he is carrying. There he delves into the delicate and complex culture of the refugee community, becoming enmeshed in the lives of a young mother and son and falling for a mysterious woman named Marie (Paula Beer, FRANTZ).

"A stunning work."
—RogerEbert.com

"Like a remake of CASABLANCA as written by Kafka."
—Indiewire

"Opens March 15"

Features and Special Events

Becoming a member at the Music Box is a great way to support the quality programming at the independently owned and operated historic movie theatre, lounge and garden. This includes our holiday classics, talkbacks, film festivals, visits from directors, producers, and actors, as well as our regular midnight, matinee, and feature presentations.

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• Advanced purchase for special screenings
• Restaurant discounts
• Deals on Music Box Films DVD’s
• Bottomless popcorn
• Discounted house wines

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Features and Special Events

DON’T REST ON YOUR LAUREL AND HARDY:
THE FILMS OF HARMONY KORINE

Friday, March 15 - Thursday, March 21
The Music Box Theatre is proud to present a near complete retrospective of films, shorts, music videos, and ephemera from one of the most peculiar & bizarre filmmakers in history and one of the last true punks of cinema.

SPRING BREAKERS
(2012, 94 mins, 35mm)
Friday, March 15 at 9:30pm
Sunday, March 17 at 9:30pm
A raucous, Britney Spears-infused feature length exploitation pop video, packed to the gills with dripping sexuality, unrelentingly poetic cyclical dialogue, a soul-shaking soundtrack boosted by a transcendent score and dreamy cinematography. Korine gleefully deconstructs the idea of the American Dream and cultural appropriation simultaneously calling out and participating in its hedonistic spoils, wallowing in the gray area of human existence. And this is all executed with the help of your favorite Disney stars of yesteryear as they tell the deceptively simple story of Faith, Candy, Brit and Cotty who discover what can happen when you’re drawn to darkness and either bail when it gets real, or follow through to the bitter end and find out what it truly means to “spring break forever.”

JULIEN DONKEY-BOY
(1999, 94 mins, 35mm)
Saturday, March 16 at 9:30pm
Thursday, March 21 at 9:30pm
DONKEY-BOY unspools entirely from the kaleidoscopic POV of an untreated schizophrenic navigating his family, his mind, and the outside world. Viewers willing to go on the journey are treated to a beautiful and sympathetic portrait of the kind of family that most pretend doesn’t exist. It often feels impressionistic, which only makes the moments of heartbreaking realism that much more effective. Being based on Korine’s own experience growing up around his schizophrenic uncle imbues the film with an overwhelming sense of love and compassion for the tragic suffering of this family. Featuring Werner Herzog as Julien’s grief-stricken father, Chloë Sevigny as Julien’s sister carrying his child, and truly one of the greatest portrayals in film history from Ewen Bremner as Julien.

MISTER LONELY
(2007, 112 mins)
Saturday, March 16 at Midnight
When asked to provide a synopsis, Korine offered this: “In broad terms, it’s a movie about a Michael Jackson impersonator living in Paris who’s down on his luck. He meets a Marilyn Monroe impersonator at a commune where all these other impersonators live. They want to put on a show in hopes that the world will come see them perform. She convinces him to go to this place and things happen. At the same time, there’s a story about nuns jumping out of airplanes.” LONELY marks to this day what is probably Korine’s greatest balancing act with beaoup characters and an effortless juggling of black comedy, gut-punching emotionality, and love for chosen family.
FEATURES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

THE BEACH BUM
(2019, 95 mins, DCP)
Monday, March 18 at 7pm
Harmony Korine’s first feature since 2012’s SPRING BREAKERS, THE BEACH BUM is an original and irreverent stoner comedy that follows the hilarious misadventures of Moondog (Matthew McConaughey), a rebellious and lovable rogue who lives life large—in a story that only Harmony Korine would be able to tell. Co-starring Isla Fisher, Snoop Dogg, Zac Efron, Jonah Hill, and Jimmy Buffett.

GUMMO
(1997, 89 mins, 35mm)
Monday, March 18 at 9:30pm
Wednesday, March 20 at 9:30pm
Taking its namesake from the fifth Marx brother, Korine’s directing debut instantly divided viewers, with Janet Maslin of the NY Times branding it the worst film of the year, while Herzog lavished it in praise, and Godard wrote Korine love letters in response. GUMMO casts its actively nonjudgmental gaze on the daily goings on of the working-class in a tornado-ravaged small town in Ohio through a non-narrative series of vignettes. It drops the viewer into a real world that oscillates between breathtaking beauty and pearl-clinching disbelief. Using inventive cinematography, editing, and choice music selections, it adds up to a film that is more experienced than seen, and put Korine firmly on the map as a truly unique voice in cinema.

WOMAN AT WAR
OPENS MARCH 22
DIRECTED BY: Benedikt Erlingsson
STARRING: Halldóra Geirharðsdóttir, Jóhann Sigurðarson
2018, 100 mins, DCP, In Icelandic with English subtitles
Halla is a fifty-year-old independent woman. But behind the scenes of a quiet routine, she leads a double life as a passionate environmental activist. Known to others only by her alias “The Woman of the Mountain,” Halla secretly wages a one-woman-war on the local aluminum industry. As Halla’s actions grow from petty vandalism to outright industrial sabotage, she succeeds in pausing the negotiations between the Icelandic government and the corporation building a new aluminum smelter. But right as she begins planning her biggest operation yet, she receives an unexpected letter that changes everything. Her application to adopt a child has finally been accepted. As Halla prepares to abandon her role as savior of the Highlands to fulfill her dream of becoming a mother, she decides to plot one final attack to deal the aluminum industry a crippling blow.

“A wry, idiosyncratic comedy that communicates important topical messages while never being less than a joy to watch.”
– Globe and Mail

“Offbeat, poignant and visually exquisite.”
– The Hollywood Reporter

DECONSTRUCTING THE 1963 BEATLES:
“YEAH YEAH YEAH”
MARCH 30 & APRIL 3
Saturday, March 30 at 11:30am & Tuesday, April 3 at 7pm
In late 1962, the Beatles stepped into EMI studios for the first time, meeting producer George Martin and beginning an unparalleled and remarkable recording career. Over the next eighteen months, they would release four number one singles (including “She Loves You” and “I Want To Hold Your Hand” and two number one albums while becoming worldwide superstars. In DECONSTRUCTING THE 1963 BEATLES, composer/producer/Beatles expert Scott Freiman explores the music that helped launch Beatlemania.
While American animation mostly remains committed to family-friendly fare—as if the only raison d’etre of the form is to pacify the kiddies—other national cinemas continue to produce engaging, evocative, and challenging animated films for adults. For every American adult-oriented film like ISLE OF DOGS, ANOMALISA, or A SCANNER DARKLY, there are at least two or three high-caliber European or Asian titles that appeal to mature viewers: LOVING VINCENT, THE RED TURTLE, THE BREADWINNER, THE ILLUSIONIST, LONG WAY NORTH, WALTZ WITH BASHIR, PERSEPOLIS, and dozens of Japanese anime from masters like Satoshi Kon and Hayao Miyazaki and his Studio Ghibli. For my money, 2018’s best animated film is from Hungary, the R-rated RUBEN BRANDT, COLLECTOR, directed by Slovenian painter and multimedia artist Milorad Krstic, who lives in Budapest with his wife and screenplay cowriter, Radmila Roczkov.

Krstic’s decades spent haunting museums and theaters provided inspiration for this exuberant caper that is literally crammed with references to great paintings, iconic pop art, and movies. The title character—whose name is an acronym of Rubens and Rembrandt—is a highly regarded psychiatrist who specializes in art therapy for patients with larcenous compulsions. He has a nose that seems lifted from Picasso’s untitled statue in Daley Plaza, and is subject to nightmares not unlike those of Gregory Peck’s amnesiac in SPELLBOUND (another, more overt reference to Hitchcock is the Sir Alfred-shaped ice cube that chills Brandt’s whiskey). Brandt’s sleeping terrors involve 13 art masterpieces that are buried in his subconscious, but which will take concrete form when he and his shaggy RESERVOIR DOGS band of clients—acrobatic kleptomaniac Mimi, bank robber Membrano, hacker Fernando, and celebrity bodyguard Bye-Bye Joe—liberate them from the walls of world-famous museums, including the Tate, MoMA, Musee d’Orsay, the Hermitage, and the Uffizi. Taking his own advice to his clients—“Possess your problems to conquer them”—the doctor gradually heals himself.

But, as in any heist film worth its salt, there are obstacles to the plan here: Mafiosi; an old CIA spook and another former Cold War operative; and a blond, chiseled detective named Kowalski (so called because of Krstic’s fondness for A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE), who also functions as Brandt’s doppelganger. Doubling is a device Krstic uses repeatedly throughout the film, from characters who have two sets of eyes, to Warhol’s Double Elvis. The entire movie is Dada-esque in its nonsensical elements and exuberant sense of play, including a sendup of performance art at a Tokyo exhibition.

It’s also more than a bit picaresque, as the viewer gets caught up in the globe-trotting adventures of Brandt’s likable rogues: a car chase in Paris evokes classic sequences from THE FRENCH CONNECTION and RONIN, a theft in the Louvre recalls TOPKAPI and any number of movies about high-tech jewel thieves. The final credit roll contains a very long list of all the artworks Krstic referenced, followed by a list of his film homages, but the viewer would be hard-pressed to have spotted them all in one sitting. Not only are they sometimes subtle and often fleeting, but also there’s so much else going on within the frame. And anyway, Krstic has reinterpreted the artworks in his own style, and more often alludes to than replicates scenes from the films he admires. (Plus, there are likely a few influences that emerged from his own subconscious that he maybe hadn’t planned to put on screen.)

RUBEN BRANDT, COLLECTOR took 110 artists four years to execute, and incorporates hand-drawn animation (the director said in an interview with Animation Magazine that he used TVPaint software), 2D computer animation (Anime Studio), digital compositing for motion graphics (After Effects), and 3D-modeling and simulation (Maya and the free, open-source toolset Blender). The end result is as seamless and fluid as a dreamscape, one that lingers pleasurably after the lights come up.

Andrea Gronvall is a contributing writer for the Chicago Reader and other publications and web sites, and has served on the adjunct faculty at the University of Chicago’s Graham School. She holds a bachelor’s degree in film theory, history, and criticism from Northwestern University; one of her most formative youthful experiences was the decade she spent studying at what was then called the School of the Art Institute of Chicago’s junior division. A movie like RUBEN BRANDT, COLLECTOR is right up her alley.
In TRANSIT: The Situation is Far from Simple

By Ignatiy Vishnevetsky

The new film by Christian Petzold, the master of socio-existential suspense, opens mid-afternoon in a Paris café. A police siren neenah-neenahs in the background. Our hero, Georg, finishes his coffee. He has mussed hair, sunken eyes, a crooked scar on his upper lip. Behind him, a tall, blue-eyed man enters the café. They know each other. They are both German. The tall, blue-eyed man says something about a refugee visa, something about martial law, something about an escape through Marseille. He gives Georg two envelopes and asks him to deliver them to another German, a writer named Weidel, at the Hotel Ryad. He promises to pay.

But, like so many noir protagonists before him, Georg will soon discover that the situation is far from simple. Before long, he finds himself escaping a police raid and hiding aboard a train bound for Marseille next to a dying man with a gangrenous leg. In the port city, he checks into a hotel where the cops regularly come to arrest guests. He has a chance encounter with a mystery woman and befriends a young boy. He adopts a new identity among the refugees, who are anxiously awaiting safe passage to Mexico or the United States ahead of the advancing German army and “the cleansing.” Many of them cling to unfinished business, even as they fear what might happen if they don’t get out in time.

The world we have been thrust into is as at once dreamlike and soul-crushingly familiar. In adapting a 1942 novel by Anna Seghers, Petzold has decided to mess with our sense of period: the uniforms, cars, and surroundings are modern; the plot is vintage; the backdrop is an invasion. Perhaps this is what the early years of World War II might look like today—not from the front lines, but from a shrinking distance, where the majority go about their lives while a growing number plan risky escapes. Taken as a whole, the effect is troubling, engrossing, and, to deploy an over-used label, thought-provoking.

Petzold’s films are often so perfectly conceived that one almost runs the risk of underevaluating his powerful gifts as a director. JERICHOW, his reimagining of James M. Cain’s classic THE POSTMAN ONLY RINGS TWICE, adds a layer to its source material’s love triangle by making the drifter a German veteran of the war in Afghanistan and the doomed husband a Turkish immigrant. In the superb BARBARA, set at a small provincial hospital in East Germany in 1980, a doctor plans an escape to the West while dealing with her own emotional and professional conflicts.

In PHOENIX, his finest work, a Jewish cabaret singer returns to Berlin after World War II and gets roped into a scheme to collect her own inheritance by her gentile husband, who has mistaken her for a stranger with a resemblance to the wife he has long presumed dead. She was disfigured in a concentration camp and has had plastic surgery. Berlin is also unrecognizable. In YELLA, an earlier and more metaphysical film, a woman loses her husband and gets a job working for a crooked businessman who looks eerily like him.

All four films star the great Nina Hoss, who has been the director’s muse since the early 2000s. Like the up-and-coming Franz Rogowski, who plays Georg in TRANSIT (the first Petzold feature not to star Hoss in some time), she has a striking presence that goes hand-in-hand with Petzold’s sense of mystery. His protagonists, though usually inextricable from the times they live in, are lost, compromised, often silent, watchful. Through their points-of-view, we experience both their internal conflicts and the fault lines around them. His stories are about suspicion, identity, incriminating paperwork, resentment, and escape in a bordered world; their implausible pulp and noir inspirations underplayed by the apparent sparingness of his style.

He does not waste anything—not least of all the audience’s attention. Among contemporary directors of thrillers (which is how most of his films can be classified), Petzold stands apart for being tight and lean. His roster of behind-the-scenes collaborators has remained remarkably consistent; it includes the cinematographer Hans Fromm, the editor Bettina Böhler, the composer Stefan Will, and, until TRANSIT, the late essay and documentary filmmaker Harun Farocki, a former film school mentor-turned-frequent co-writer. Across the films, one sees the continuing development of Petzold’s sensibilities: in the exceptional sound design of BARBARA, in the haunting use of music in PHOENIX and TRANSIT, in the overall preference for visual and narrative economy. His filmmaking is concise, though his subject matter is potently ambiguous.

But rarely is that ambiguity as blatant as in TRANSIT. Its tensions are meaningfully dislocated and anachronistic. Its descriptive voice-over narration doesn’t always line up with what we see on screen. (The reason for this only becomes clear near the end.) Its mise-en-scène is a mishmash of past and present, filled with consular offices, hotel rooms, café tables, dockyards, street corners, and other places one goes to wait or get caught—the unbearable tension of killing time and then having to move in a split second. Among the possible meanings of the title, perhaps the most pointed is this: It is neither here nor there, the things left behind still recedingly visible, the destination not yet in focus. In it, we find the cruel ironies of wartime, the Kafkaesque ironies of refugeedom, and the doom of trying to start over when there’s nowhere to go.

Ignatiy Vishnevetsky is a writer and critic. He was the staff film critic for The A.V. Club until 2018. He lives in Chicago.
Without generalizing about cinema from any particular nation, it’s safe to say that many of the films that come out of Iceland are difficult to categorize, which is absolutely meant as a compliment since movies that don’t easily fit into a single genre are also often unpredictable, exciting and the result of a mind that sees the world in a slightly different way than the rest of the world. Well-known Icelandic actor Benedikt Erlingsson makes his sophomore directorial effort (after 2013’s OF HORSES AND MEN) with WOMAN AT WAR, a work that is part dark comedy, part chase film, part family drama, part socio-political commentary, part environmental activism and part inner journey into the human spirit of helping—both others and ourselves. But nothing about the film feels fractured or disjointed. In fact, it’s a work that flows organically as middle-aged Halla (Halldóra Geirharðsdóttir) attempts to carry out her self-appointed mission to sabotage a local aluminum manufacturing plant in an effort to save the picturesque, lush face of the Icelandic highlands.

Halla is a true environmental warrior, cutting power to the massive plant, thus truly gumming up the works and causing a great deal of pricey damage in the process. These constant interruptions make the company look particularly bad in the eyes of a potential Chinese investor that is on the verge of pulling out of a major deal with the aluminum company. Halla is practically part homegrown superhero as she uses a high-end bow and arrow to destroy power lines; she also possesses the skills to avoid capture by helicopters scanning the countryside with thermal viewers and teams on the ground with hound dogs. Nicknamed “Mountain Woman” by the press, she befriends a local sheep farmer (Jóhann Sigurðarson), who may or may not be a cousin but is definitely not on the side of what the aluminum company is doing to the mossy, lush green landscape.

In town, Halla is best known as the local, mild-mannered choir director whose Mountain Woman identity is known only to Baldvin (Jörundur Ragnarsson), a member of her chorus who also happens to be a government official, nervously feeding her information. She also has a twin sister, Ása (also played by Geirharðsdóttir), whose pursuits are more inwardly spiritual and who believes that the best way to better the world is improve herself. Halla’s world is turned upside down when she receives a call about an application she put in four years earlier to adopt a young orphan girl from the Ukraine. Just when she’s on the verge of committing her most elaborate and destructive act against the company, she is asked to care more about a single child than an entire nation, and she is genuinely torn by the decision she must make.

Submitted as the Iceland official entry for this year’s Academy Award for Best Foreign Language film (as Erlingsson’s previous directing effort was), WOMAN AT WAR is a wonderfully twisting and turning narrative that cares as much about the country’s growing pains, as it allows more foreign investors into its industry, as it does about one person’s efforts to help the world in large and small ways. Being Icelandic, the film also has some wonderfully surreal touches, including a three-piece band that appears to Halla at key moments in her life to provide both motivation and sly commentary on her subversive behavior (sometimes they sit and watch her, waiting to begin playing when they feel a soundtrack might be the most useful to her). I’m not sure if it’s more or less surreal that occasionally the musicians are accompanied by a trio of Ukrainian folk singers; you be the judge.

The setting may seem exotic and the circumstances unusual, but there is a great deal about WOMAN AT WAR that also feel universal. There’s a need in Halla to be a protector, and she risks a great deal in the name of saving what she cares most about, including this child she’s never met. There’s a sense that the world is closing in on her, but that only seems to make her tougher and more resilient. The film is an absolutely powerful profile of strength that is surprisingly moving and charming, with Geirharðsdóttir giving two of the most satisfying performances in recent memory.

Steve Prokopy is the chief film critic for the Chicago-based arts outlet Third Coast Review (www.ThirdCoastReview.com). For nearly 20 years, he was the Chicago Editor for Ain’t It Cool News, where he contributed film reviews and filmmaker/actor interviews under the name “Capone.”
In anticipation of TRANSIT, the latest release from Music Box Films, the Music Box celebrates the career of writer-director Christian Petzold with a special weekend matinee series.

**BARBARA**
(Christian Petzold, 2012, 105 mins, 35mm)
A tense early '80s Cold War thriller with nary a gunshot fired, BARBARA is a compelling portrait of a woman (Nina Hoss) who withdraws from an inhospitable and oppressive world. An amicable and understanding doctor who enjoys a superb rapport with her patients, Barbara has nonetheless been exiled to a provincial East German hospital after filing for an exit visa from the GDR. This powerful character study provides a detailed x-ray of the good doctor's dilemma, as love, loyalty, and basic human decency compete in a brutal closed system.

**YELLA**
(Christian Petzold, 2007, 89 mins, 35mm)
Taking inspiration from Herk Harvey's Midwest classic CARNIVAL OF SOULS, YELLA is a thriller steeped in undead malevolence. Ambitious accountant Yella (Nina Hoss) flees her abusive husband for an illusory job in Hanover; picking up the pieces, she must concoct a scheme to stay afloat amidst a legion of greasy grifters and specters from her past. "I could see this being remade," mused Roger Ebert, "as one of those business thrillers with Michael Douglas looking cruel and expensive and finding his female equal. I'm not recommending that, just imagining it."

**PHOENIX**
(Christian Petzold, 2014, 98 mins, DCP)
Spun out from a premise simultaneously implausible and sublime, PHOENIX reworks VERTIGO to deliver a stunning treatise on romantic and national delusion. Holocaust survivor Nelly Lenz (Nina Hoss) receives plastic surgery and returns to Germany after the war in search of her husband (Ronald Zehrfeld) who may have turned her over to the SS. He fails to recognize her, but believes that she might convincingly pass as his "dead" wife (that is to say, as herself) in a scheme to reclaim her confiscated inheritance. She will re-appear fresh from the camps in a stunning dress, with nary a hair out of place—the sparkling embodiment of the German people's denial of their own complicity in genocide.

**JERICHO**
(Christian Petzold, 2008, 93 mins, 35mm)
"You can’t love if you don’t have money," Laura (Nina Hoss) tells Thomas (Benno Fürmann), the ex-soldier who's been hired as a driver for her husband’s semi-lucrative snack car empire in the former East Germany. The husband, Ali (Hilmi Sözer), is a Turk living uncomfortably in Germany, painfully aware that even his limited social stature—including his marriage—is provisional, tentatively bought and paid for. This spare, icy thriller transposes the desert tryst of James M. Cain's THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE an equally desolate locale with unforgettable results.
CONTINUING SERIES

THE CHICAGO FILM SOCIETY PRESENTS

The Chicago Film Society hosts monthly presentations featuring classic films, underseen rarities, cult movies, short subjects, trailer reels and more, all on glorious celluloid. For more information, visit www.chicagofilmsociety.org.

ROCK ‘N’ ROLL HIGH SCHOOL
(Allan Arkush, 1979, 93 mins, 35mm)
Monday, February 25 at 7pm
Riff Randell is the biggest Ramones fan at Vince Lombardi High School, but her plans to liberate her dance-crazy classmates with tickets to see the band are put in danger when the dictatorial new school principal Evelyn Togar declares a moratorium on rock ‘n’ roll. This Roger Corman-produced youthsploitation effort was pitched for Cheap Trick but gloriously retrofitted for the brothers from Queens. Like an issue of Mad Magazine come to life, ROCK ‘N’ ROLL HIGH SCHOOL never relents in its wall-to-wall silliness, a cyclone of bad puns, and dopey sight gags. You’re never too old to be a teenage lobotomy.

New 35MM print courtesy of Jon Davison and the Academy Film Archive

GHOST WORLD
(Terry Zwigoff, 2001, 111 mins, 35mm)
Monday, March 25 at 7pm
Adapted by Daniel Clowes and Terry Zwigoff from the former’s underground graphic novel, GHOST WORLD remains the definitive portrait of post-high school ennui, quarter-age disaffection, and the everyday oppression thrust upon us by other people. Best friends Enid (Thora Birch) and Becky (Scarlett Johansson) are finally ready to find a place of their own amid the strip malls of greater Los Angeles, but their mutual contempt for goody-two-shoes classmates, extroverted pseudo-bohemians, and yuppy ‘zine entrepreneurs may not be sufficient to bridge their increasingly divergent values. The greatest stumbling block is Seymour (Steve Buscemi), the self-loathing record collector who sets Enid’s heart aflutter and sends Becky rushing to get a job. We memorized every line of this tender firecracker as teenagers and can’t believe it’s finally reached the age of maturity.

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THE ADVENTURES OF PRINCE ACHMED
(Lotte Reiniger, 1926, 66 mins, 35mm)
Saturday, February 9 at 11:30am

Three years in the making, Lotte Reiniger’s THE ADVENTURES OF PRINCE ACHMED is a hand-made tapestry of silhouette animation that may as well have sprung from a magic lamp. A free adaptation of several stories from the Arabian Nights, this mythical journey from Bagdad to Wakkawak, with plenty of witches, sorcerers, and flying horses along the way, conjures more wonderful sights from card stock and tissue paper than any modern blockbusters can muster. As the first animated feature, PRINCE ACHMED’s place in the history books is secure, but its craftsmanship remains singular and undiminished, with its intricately designed puppets, its freely undulating backdrops, its otherworldly special effects, and its unstoppable narrative ascend to the clouds.

FRAGMENT OF AN EMPIRE
(Fridrikh Ermler, 1929, 109 mins, 35mm)
Saturday, March 16 at 11:30am

An amnesiac soldier from Petrograd stumbles home from the Eastern Front after the First World War and finds a new and unrecognizable society awaiting him. His hometown is now Leningrad, and that’s the least of it: workers’ unions, modernist architecture, and new understandings of sex and marriage roil the landscape. FRAGMENT OF AN EMPIRE is social history rendered as science fiction—a conceit that allows the film to explain the Soviet Union to itself and the wider world. An exceedingly nuanced work, FRAGMENT OF AN EMPIRE takes the Russian Revolution and its toll on newly minted comrades seriously, giving equal weight to the excitement and the dislocation, the promise of a new society and the cataclysm of everyday life.

Cocktail Menu

MANHATTAN
George Dickel rye whisky, Gallo sweet vermouth, Angostura bitters, black cherry

NEGRONI
Knickerbocker barrel aged gin, Tattersall bitter orange liqueur, Gallo sweet vermouth

PICKFORD
CH rum, Luxardo maraschino liqueur, lime juice, pineapple juice, grenadine

FRENCH 75
CH London dry gin, lime juice, simple syrup, topped with primavera prosecco

THE DUDE
CH vodka, St. George NOLA Coffee Liqueur, half & half cream
### MIDNIGHTS

**FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS AT MIDNIGHT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Movie</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Runtime</th>
<th>Format</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 8 &amp; 9</td>
<td>OVERLORD</td>
<td>Julius Avery</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>110 mins</td>
<td>DCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 22 &amp; March 22</td>
<td>THE ROOM</td>
<td>Tommy Wiseau</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>99 mins</td>
<td>35mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 23 &amp; March 23</td>
<td>THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW</td>
<td>Jim Sharman</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>100 mins</td>
<td>35mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>DRAG ME TO HELL</td>
<td>Sam Raimi</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>99 mins</td>
<td>35mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>TRASH HUMPERS</td>
<td>Harmony Korine</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>78 mins</td>
<td>35mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>MISTER LONELY</td>
<td>Harmony Korine</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>112 mins</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 29 &amp; 30</td>
<td>VELVET GOLDMINE</td>
<td>Todd Haynes</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>118 mins</td>
<td>35mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 30</td>
<td>DEATHGASM</td>
<td>Jason Lei Howden</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>86 mins</td>
<td>DCP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Christine (Alison Lohman) is a loan officer worried about her lot in life, her competitive co-workers and her emotionally distant boyfriend. Determined not to look weak to her boss, she refuses a loan extension to the absolute wrong person: a decrepit witch who curses her with a one-way ticket to Hell, unless she ditches the demons before it’s too late...

**VELVET GOLDMINE**

*(Todd Haynes, 1998, 118 mins, 35mm)*

Set in London in the early ’70s during the emergence of the glam-rock scene, VELVET GOLDMINE follows the rise of Brian Slade, a mythical rock icon who finds himself at the very epicenter of the pleasures and decadence of his day. At the peak of his fame, Brian and his wife Mandy cruise the nightspots of New York and mix with the likes of Ewan McGregor’s Curt Wild, his spiritual twin and fellow glam rocker—until Brian disappears after a publicity stunt gone wrong. Years later, British journalist Arthur Stuart delves into the mystery to uncover what happened.
THE APPARITION
VINCENT LINDON  GALATEA BELLUGI
A FILM BY XAVIER GIANNOLI

“A WELL-CRAFTED RELIGIOUS EPIC.”
—JORDAN MINTZER, THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

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