

## Document Citation

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# 'Time Regained'

Thurs/13, Castro Theatre

**A** coda to the 20th century and a gurgling up of burnished, dying beauty, *Time Regained* takes place on a dream screen. In adapting the last book of Proust's mammoth novel, *In Search of Lost Time* — "the Nile of language," according to Walter Benjamin — director Raul Ruiz takes fantastic liberties while playing for time. Set in the mind of Proust as he's dying, it is a lovely, lively, strange scrapbook of experience, sparked by his looking at photographs through a magnifying glass. This vision becomes a reverie of elegant dinners, operas, parties, funerals, social affairs, chance meetings, and remarks, none more important than the other. Like the film *Naked Lunch*, *Time Regained* thrives on an inside-outside grappling of author (played here by Marcello Mazzarella) and text. The result is lingering, obsessive, and fetishistic; it's perhaps the first time an entire life has really flashed before a viewer, with all of its gangly emotions, misunderstandings, and hallucinations. Ruiz's treatment comes off as almost loony and supernatural, but it is also reverent and well ordered. Furniture seems to navigate itself around a deathbed; Proust leans his head back tearfully at a recital as the seated crowd shifts around him; he stands at a door and enters a room where a dead

man addresses a child version of himself. New editions of people and events spring up, and his mind is continually reinventing them with feeling. Completely faithful to Proust's hyperdetailed words, Ruiz has found a home for his unusual, frisky, formal experiments, and here he's made time itself the main character. Here, everything is fluid: even the sets don't seem to stand still. *Time Regained* is not so much an embalmed early-20th century period movie as a meditation on movies, period. Proust apparently hated films, but that hasn't kept Ruiz from turning Proust's last gasp into a case for strange, tangled storytelling. Ruiz himself has made more than 150 films, and when he told an interviewer a few years ago his intention to make Proust's novel's last section into a dinner party for French actors of the 1960s, it sounded like a gag. No one could have anticipated how brilliant that gag would be, with Catherine Deneuve and a kinky, kinky John Malkovich in tow. *Time Regained* gnarls and bends your mind, and may well exhaust it. Also July 22, UC Theatre, and July 28, Rafael Film Center. See Rep Clock for show times. (Edward E. Crouse)



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