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Nuit et brouillard (Night and fog), Resnais, Alain, 1955

L'année dernière à marienbad (Last year at marienbad), Resnais, Alain, 1961

Je t'aime, je t'aime (I love you, I love you), Resnais, Alain, 1968

La guerre est finie (The war is over), Resnais, Alain, 1966

Guernica, Resnais, Alain, 1950

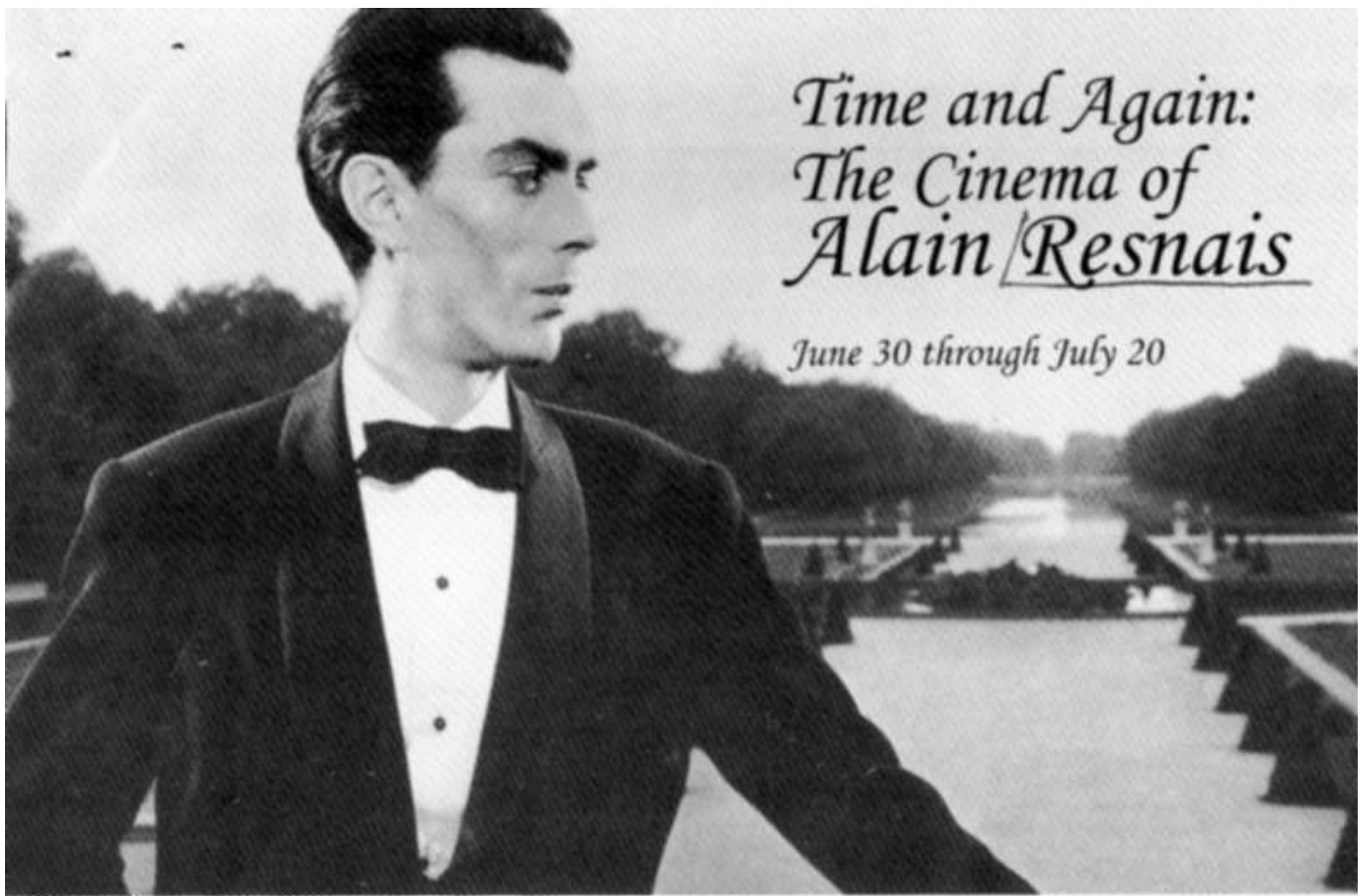
Gauguin, Resnais, Alain, 1950

Le chant du styrene, Resnais, Alain, 1958

La vie est un roman (Life is a bed of roses), Resnais, Alain, 1983

Mon oncle d'Amérique (My American uncle), Resnais, Alain, 1980

Hiroshima mon amour (Hiroshima, my love), Resnais, Alain, 1959



Time and Again: The Cinema of Alain Resnais

June 30 through July 20

Thanks to Gwen Deglise and the American Cinémathèque, the Harvard Film Archive, the British Film Institute, Edith Kramer and the Pacific Film Archive and Michael Silberman and USA Films.

Since his beginnings in documentary and the essay film, and throughout his routinely innovative career, Alain Resnais has endeavored to portray the machinery of consciousness. The human brain as flying machine, trying to maintain a steady course through the unstable atmosphere of time—this is the dilemma that Resnais has been busy dramatizing for the last half-century, and he's kept company with some mighty provocative collaborators: Marguerite Duras, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Jorge Semprun, David Mercer, Stephen Sondheim, Chris Marker, Jules Feiffer, Alan Ayckbourn and Professor Henri Laborit among them. By turns playful and monumental, complex and eminently lucid, Resnais' cinema produces an exhilaration unlike any other. Each film is a journey—through the memory of Hiroshima and its forbidding place in 20th century history, through the mind of a dying novelist, through the fantasy lives of a group of garden-variety neurotics, through the portal of the past via a 1920s melodrama. But the collected work of this ardent fan of Broadway musicals and comic strips adds up to far more than a series of intellectual adventures: taken altogether, it's like a grand voyage to the edge of infinity. Make the journey with us during this close-to-complete retrospective, featuring multiple New York premieres, including his delightful "interactive" comedies *Smoking* and *No Smoking*.

Smoking (140m) / **No Smoking** (142m)

The New York premiere of Resnais' 1993 two-pronged interactive comic tour de force, based on six of the eight playlets by British author Alan Ayckbourn grouped under the title "Intimate Exchanges," and adapted by the writing team of Jean-Pierre Bacri and Agnès Jaoui (who also wrote *UN AIR DE FAMILLE* and Resnais' recent *SAME OLD SONG*). *SMOKING* and *NO SMOKING*, which can be seen in any order, both center around the marriage of an alcoholic headmaster named Toby Teasdale and his timid wife Celia, and the predicaments that ensue when they cross paths with the super-suave Lionel Hepplewick and the modest housekeeper Sylvie Bell. All four men's roles are played by Pierre Arditi and all five women's roles by

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Smoking / No Smoking



Je t'aime, je t'aime
(above & below)



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Resnais' favorite actress, Sabine Azema. And in a gorgeously artificial light conjured up by the great cinematographer Renato Berta that evokes school primers, comic strips and the stage, Resnais playfully meditates on free will and chance by offering alternate versions of events, spurred by the smallest shifts in action...such as the difference between smoking and not smoking. A film experience that is at once provocative, mysterious and truly joyful. A USA Films release.

Smoking: Fri June 30: 1 & 6:30; Sat July 1: 3:50 & 9:15; Mon July 3: 3:45 & 9:15; Sat July 8: 3:15; Sun July 9: 5:45; Mon July 10: 3:15 & 8:30; Thurs July 13: 3:30; Wed July 19: 1 & 6:30; Thurs July 20: 3:50

No Smoking: Fri June 30: 3:40 & 9:10; Sat July 1: 6:30; Tues July 4: 3:15 & 8:30; Sat July 8: 6; Sun July 9: 3; Wed July 12: 1 & 6:15; Wed July 19: 3:40 & 9:10; Thurs July 20: 1

Je t'aime, je t'aime / I Love You, I Love You

(1967, 91m)

Resnais once explained that his work dealt with the desire to "stop death in its tracks, the toll that time takes on us, just as the the photographer or the painter wants to capture forever the face and body of the woman they love." In *Je t'aime, je t'aime*, whose Cannes premiere was ruined by the events of May 1968, Resnais rendered explicit what had been implicit in his previous work, and made a movie about time travel. After a failed attempt at suicide, Claude Ridder (Claude Rich) is chosen as the first man to journey back into time. But the past is his own past, and the routes that he has to take to commune with his beloved Catrine are as complex and bewildering as a trip through a maze. Funny, moving and bewitching, this rarely seen film is one of Resnais' richest. Written by Jacques Sternberg, with a score by the great Krzysztof Penderecki. A new print has been struck for this series.

Sun July 2: 3:50 & 8:30

ALAIN RESNAIS DOCUMENTARIES (145m)

Le Chant de Styrène (1958, 19m), **Gauguin** (1950, 11m), **Van Gogh** (1948, 20m), **Toute la mémoire du monde** (1956, 22m), **Les Statues meurent aussi / Statues Also Weep** (1953, 30m), **Nuit et brouillard / Night and Fog** (1955, 32m), **Guernica** (1950, 12m)

Before he took the world of cinema by storm with *Hiroshima, mon amour*, Resnais made a series of documentary essay films which rank with his greatest work and each of which has as complex a relationship with time as his features: his tributes to Van Gogh and Gauguin; *Guernica*; *Les Statues meurent aussi*, his controversial film about African statues (written by Chris Marker) that was only seen in a censored cut for years because it took on the still loaded topic of French racism; *Night and Fog*, his immortal, utterly devastating journey into the memory of the holocaust; *Toute la mémoire du monde*, his Borgesian portrait of the Bibliothèque Nationale; and *Le Chant du styrène*. A program not to be missed.

Sun July 2: 5:45

Mon July 3: 1 & 6:30

Time and Again: The Cinema of Alain Resnais



Geraldine Chaplin & (above) & Vittorio Gassman (below) in *La Vie est un roman*



Same Old Song (above) *Mon Oncle d'Amérique* (below)



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La Vie est un roman / Life Is a Bed of Roses

(1983, 111m)

An eccentric, visionary count (Ruggero Raimondi, the opera singer who starred in Joseph Losey's film of *Don Giovanni*) at the turn of the century invites his friends into his rococo pleasure palace, his Temple of Happiness. Seventy years later, the same palace is used as the site for a conference on alternative education. Two time frames, two visions of Utopia, are deftly interwoven in this most magical of Resnais' films. With Vittorio Gassman, Geraldine Chaplin, and Fanny Ardant. With a beautiful score by M. Philippe-Gérard and gorgeous camerawork by Bruno Nuytten.

Tues July 4: 1 & 6:10

On Connaît la chanson / Same Old Song

(1997, 122m)

Resnais was a big Dennis Potter fan, and this was his loving tribute to the late writer. But while songs signify the dream lives of Potter's characters, the popular songs that flow from the psyches of Resnais' characters serve the same sort of function as the movie memories of the characters in *Mon Oncle d'Amérique* they're part of their make-up as people, sitting right at the core of who they are. *Same Old Song*, one of Resnais' most sheerly delightful films, is once again about a menagerie of believably neurotic Parisians: Odile (Sabine Azéma), an hysteric desperately in search of a bigger apartment; her sister Camille (Agnès Jaoui, also the film's co-writer, with Jean-Pierre Bacri, the same team responsible for *Smoking/No Smoking*); Simon (André Dussollier), the real estate agent with whom Camille falls in love. Every character has a flawed exterior that not too carefully conceals a nervous bundle of impulses and longings, and Resnais' unflinching look at the way people function is tempered here by a newfound serenity and tenderness. A piece of advice: don't let the fact that you don't know the songs bother you. It's what they mean to the characters that's so touching.

Wed July 5: 1 & 6; Thurs July 6: 3:30 & 8:30

Mon Oncle d'Amérique / My American Uncle

(1980, 123m)

What it is to be human, according to Resnais via the theories of behaviorist Henri Laborit. In one of Resnais' most playful films (and one of his biggest hits). Laborit, appearing as himself and commenting on questions of motivation, anxiety, and role-modeling, is interspersed with key moments in the lives of a technical manager in the middle of a downsizing panic (Gérard Depardieu), an actress in the midst of a life crisis (Nicole Garcia), and a writer/politician (Roger Pierre), each of whom identifies with a movie star. Somehow, right at the center of life, is the elusive dream of being elsewhere, delivered from the pressures of existence by a sudden inheritance from the mythical "American uncle" of the title. Resnais and screenwriter Jean Gruault "manage to convey a dense, multilayered narrative with remarkable ease and simplicity. The film is also memorable for its dead-on portrayal of French yuppiedom in its early ascendancy" (Jonathan Rosenbaum). A must re-see.

Wed July 5: 3:30 & 8:30

Thurs July 6: 1 & 6

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Adolph Green (above) and
Gérard Depardieu (below) in
I Want to Go Home



Mélo



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L'Amour à mort / Love Unto Death

(1984, 93m)

Simon (Pierre Arditi), an archeologist, is miraculously resurrected from the dead, but he's persistently haunted by his memories of what he saw. In one of his most audacious aesthetic moves, Resnais signifies Simon's visions with gaps, ghostly white-outs, scored by the great German composer Werner Henze. As Simon is further and further drawn back into death, to the final death beyond the one he's already experienced, he's comforted by the people he's met on the other side. Co-starring Fanny Ardant and Sabine Azéma, *L'Amour à mort* is one of Resnais' least known films here in the states, and maybe one of his most chilling. "One of the most ambitious films in the history of cinema" (Gilles Deleuze).

Fri July 7: 1, 6 & 10:10; Sun July 9: 1 & 8:30

I Want to Go Home

(1989, 105m)

Cleveland cartoonist Joey Wellman (Adolph Green) accepts an invitation to have his work shown in an exclusive Parisian gallery. He suffers the pains of travel to a foreign country in hopes of reconciling with his estranged daughter Elsie (Laura Benson), who is trying her best to rid herself of her American provinciality and become French. Her father's greatest admirer, intellectual Christian Gauthier (Gérard Depardieu), is the figure she most admires and emulates. This odd comedy of cultural misalliances, written by cartoonist Jules Feiffer and scored by John (Cabaret) Kander, features a beautifully spirited performance by Green and a charming one by Depardieu. Like all Resnais' films, there's a funny mental/soulful mechanism that unites the characters in this case, little interjections from an animated cat, Joey's trademark character. With Linda Lavin as Joey's girlfriend.

Fri July 7: 3 & 8

Sat July 8: 1 & 8:45

Mélo

(1986, 110m)

Another trip in the cinematic time machine with Uncle Alain. Resnais gave us one of his biggest surprises with this "recreation" of a 1929 theatrical melodrama by Henry Bernstein, as popular in France at the time as Philip Barry's plays were in America. The action—a love triangle among a violinist (André Dussollier), a suburbanite (Pierre Arditi) and his wife (Sabine Azéma)—takes place within the confines of stage space, and every act is punctuated with a painted curtain, but within that space the camera follows and articulates the action with passionate precision. What Resnais does here is to recreate the actual mental space of "melodrama," years after it had gone hopelessly out of fashion.

Mon July 10: 1 & 6:15

Wed July 12: 3:45 & 9

La Guerre est fini / The War Is Over

(1966, 121m)

Diego (Yves Montand), the Spanish communist party chief who lives under multiple assumed identities, is arrested as he's crossing the border into France. He's a revolutionary without a cause or a

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Yves Montand in *La Guerre Est Fini*



Emmanuelle Riva in *Hiroshima mon amour*

Delphine Seyrig in *L'Année dernière à Marienbad*



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country, haunted by the memory of the past and lost in the present: he spends his time in Paris visiting his mistress (Ingrid Thulin) and trying to find his old comrade Juan (Jean-François Rémi), to warn him not to cross into Franco's Spain. Montand is powerfully moving and romantic as this lost man of ideals, and Resnais offers a powerful illustration of a troubling question: what happens to political commitment in the rush of time? Written by Jorge Semprun, shot by Sacha Vierny, with music by Italian composer Giovanni Fusco.

Thurs July 13: 1 & 9:20

Hiroshima, mon amour

(1959, 88m)

Resnais' feature debut, a collaboration with novelist Marguerite Duras, was a revolutionary event in movies. Unapologetically modernist, digging right into the heart of 20th century horror, *Hiroshima, mon amour* is one of the few movies that actually changed cinema forever. The great Emmanuelle Riva is the French actress in Hiroshima to make a film about "peace." Eiji Okada is the Japanese man with whom she has an affair, and who reminds her of her dead German lover (Bernard Fresson). Their coupling marks the site where the sensual, the historical, the imaginary and the unthinkable meet. Still as mesmerizing and forceful as it was 40 years ago, *Hiroshima, mon amour* marks the real beginning of modernism in cinema. "Seeing *Hiroshima* gives you the impression of watching a film that would have been absolutely inconceivable in terms of what you already know of cinema" (Jean-Luc Godard).

Fri July 14: 1, 5 & 9

Sat July 15: 3:15 & 7:15

L'Année dernière à Marienbad / Last Year at Marienbad

(1961, 93m)

Resnais' second explosion in decentered narrative film form via the nouveau roman (this time the collaborator was Alain Robbe-Grillet) polarized viewers all around the world. The setting is a vast European chateau. A man, whom we will call X (Giorgio Albertazzi), tries to persuade a woman, A (Delphine Seyrig), that they've met and had an affair the previous year at Marienbad. The rhythm of the film, combined with Sacha Vierny's rich black and white cinematography, the incantatory repetitions of Robbe-Grillet's dialogue, and the ritualistic severity of the actions make for a brooding, deeply unsettling experience. Unlike any other film ever made before or since, *Marienbad* may be the only film ever made about the terrifying persistence of memory.

Fri July 14: 3 & 7

Sat July 15: 1:15, 5:15 & 9:15

Providence

(1977, 110m)

The great John Gielgud is Clive Langham, a mercurial British novelist dying of cancer, in Resnais' first English language film, written by playwright David Mercer. For large portions of this initially enigmatic but uniquely powerful film, Gielgud is offscreen, but that magnificent voice—"like a trumpet muffled with silk" as Molly

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John Gielgud in *Providence*
Delphine Seyrig in *Muriel*



Jean-Paul Belmondo
in *Stavisky*



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Haskell once put it—is ever present, directing the comings and goings of the various real and imaginary personages floating in and out of the fever-dream narrative being woven in his mind. They include his sons (Dirk Bogarde and David Warner), daughter-in-law (Ellen Burstyn), late wife (Elaine Stritch), as well as a stagey-looking wolf man, a cadaver and the participants in some kind of revolution. A funny, dense, troubling, ultimately majestic film, unlike any other, even by Resnais.

Sun July 16: 1:10 & 5:50; Tues July 18: 3:20

Muriel ou le temps d'un retour / Muriel, or the Time of a Return

(1963; 115m)

Resnais followed the one-two punch of *Hiroshima, mon amour* and *Last Year at Marienbad* with this fragmentary excavation of the past, both personal and political, written by Jean Cayrol. Delphine Seyrig is Hélène, owner of an antique store in provincial France, who obsesses on the memory of her ex-lover Alphonse (Jean-Pierre Kérien), as her stepson Bernard (Jean-Baptiste Thierrée) agonizes over the memory of a nameless woman he calls Muriel, whom he tortured and murdered during his army stint in Algeria. In some ways even denser than *Marienbad*, *Muriel* is also more tuned in to exterior realities, in this case the realities of the French bourgeoisie and the then scalding (and controversial) topic of the Algerian war. "A subtle, precise, and wrenching film" (Dave Kehr).

Sun July 16: 3:30 & 8:10; Tues July 18: 1

DOCUMENTARIES, 1947

Visite à Lucien Coutaud, Visite à Felix Labisse, Visite à Hans Hartung, Visite à Cesar Domela, Portrait d'Henri Goetz, Visite à Christine Bouteiller (total: 92m)

"These are Essais Cinématographiques—early sketches, not fully completed films, in my opinion." — Alain Resnais

These silent short film portraits of artists—Resnais' very first work on film—have never been screened in the USA. We thank Gisèle Breteau Skira of the Collection Films Sur L'Art Du Centre Georges Pompidou for making them available.

Mon July 17: 2 & 6:30

Stavisky

(1974; 115m)

Resnais came back from a long hiatus after the commercial failure of *Je t'aime, je t'aime* with this gorgeous film. Resnais and his scenarist Jean Gruault worked from the real story of Serge Alexandre Stavisky (Jean-Paul Belmondo), a small-time swindler whose big connections elevated him to the level of international financier, and whose undoing caused a major political scandal in 1933. But *Stavisky* is no biography. It's a meditation on the past, and on the fragility of beauty and time, as delicately constructed as a good watch. Belmondo is a perfect Stavisky, but the three elements that really give this film its haunting lilt are Sacha Vierny's shimmering cinematography, Charles Boyer's peerlessly beautiful acting as Baron Raoul, and Steven Sondheim's score, one of the most haunting ever composed for a movie.

Mon July 17: 4 & 8:30