

# FEATURE FILMS

## **3 WOMEN (3 ZAN)**

*d. Manijeh Hekmat, Iran 2008 PF*

**25 Suncoast 16h00; 27 Nouveau 12h00**

Hekmat, who made the moving *Women's Prison*, casts her gaze on the lives and struggles of three women in this inter-generational drama. Niki Karimi, who was on DIFF's International Jury last year, plays Minou, an expert rug-maker who is so obsessed with her work that she neglects her mother and daughter, who both live with her. The daughter runs away, and while on a carpet-related errand, Minou also loses her senile mother, and the valuable carpet she was after. Insightfully documenting the generational gaps in Iran, and indeed elsewhere, *3 Women* is a daring and honest look at filial bonds ruptured and reformed.

*Farsi with English subtitles, Video, 94 min*

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## **57000 KM BETWEEN US (57000 KM ENTRE NOUS)**

*d. Delphine Kreuter, France 2007 CF*

**30 Suncoast 18h00; 01 Musgrave 18h00**

Kreuter's excellent debut takes place in a digital world of webcams and online gaming, but its essential concerns are with human connections. A dysfunctional family must suffer their stepfather's obsessive desire to record everything on his video camera, while a dying boy, whose mother cannot bear to visit him in hospital, communicates with the outside world through webcams and online games. Sometimes genuine connections are made through the optical cables, and Kreuter's ingenious and loving film delicately presents these relationships in all their complexity.

*Filmmaker in attendance*

*French with English subtitles, 35mm, 82 min*

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## **ADORATION**

*d. Atom Egoyan, Canada/France 2008 PF*

**26 Musgrave 20h00; 01 Sneddon 20h00**

Fresh from its Competition berth in Cannes, *Adoration* is about terrorism, technology and a young man who gets embroiled in a complicated game. Egoyan, who won the DIFF Best Film Award for *Ararat*, has made yet another challenging and enthralling film. When an orphan, Simon, hears a story of a terrorist who plants a bomb in the luggage of his pregnant girlfriend who is travelling to Israel, he imagines himself to be the child of that couple. He soon begins to present this fantasy as fact, leading to great controversy as he converses with critics through the internet. Simon is unaware, though, that he is part of a greater plan.

*English and French with English subtitles, 35mm, 101 min*

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## AIN'T SCARED (REGARDE-MOI)

d. Audrey Estrougo, France 2007 CF

30 Musgrave 20h15; 02 Musgrave 16h00

23-year-old Estrougo's dazzling debut uses an innovative style to look at a day in the life of a culturally-diverse group of teenagers in a Parisian housing estate. Economic hardship unites these teens as they tease and try to bed each other, with funny and tragic results. The first half of the film is told from the perspective of the males, while the second from that of the females. Refreshingly frank about race, friendships and sexuality and as hip and stylish as the characters it lovingly examines, *Ain't Scared* marks the appearance of a major new talent.

Filmmaker in attendance

**French with English subtitles, 35mm, 97 min**

## AND ALONG COME TOURISTS (AM ENDE KOMMEN TOURISTEN)

d. Robert Thalheim, Germany 2007 PF

27 Nouveau 16h00; 02 Sneddon 22h15

When Sven, a young German who opts for civil service abroad rather than military service, is sent to Auschwitz, it is a complete culture shock. The small Polish town draws tourists to the memorial to inhumanity, and Sven seems completely bemused and lost. Sven has got to care for cantankerous Krzemiński, a camp survivor who never left. Despite antagonism from the locals, Sven strikes up a friendship with Ania, a pretty guide who puts him up at her apartment. Subtle and knowing, humorous and tragic, *And Along Come Tourists* explores its heavy subject matter in an accessible and light-hearted way without losing sight of the horrors in its midst.

**German and Polish with English subtitles, 35mm, 85 min**

## ANOTHER MAN'S GARDEN

d. Sol de Carvalho, Mozambique 2006 PF

31 Suncoast 18h00; 01 Ekhaya 18h00

"Sending a girl to school is like watering another man's garden" is the prevailing attitude that Sol de Carvalho challenges in his powerful *Another Man's Garden*. The film documents the struggles that young women in Mozambique must face to get an education. Aside from the financial hardships, there are also lecherous teachers eager to bed as many schoolgirls as possible. Sofia aims to get into medical school, but a series of events makes this virtually impossible. The film is scathingly critical of those who exploit the young women as they try to surmount these obstacles to achieving an education.

Filmmaker in attendance

**Portuguese with English subtitles, Video, 95 min**

## BAD HABITS (MALOS HÁBITOS)

d. Simon Brass, Mexico 2007 PF

25 Musgrave 22h30; 03 Sneddon 14h00

A visually and emotionally arresting tale of religious faith and eating disorders, *Bad Habits* has an anorexic nun who starves herself in the belief that this will heal the sick, a mother who is so ashamed of her daughter's chubbiness that she forces her to go on diet before her first communion, and a husband who, tired of his wife's boniness, seeks solace in the arms of a buxom student. One family, diverse eating disorders. Their faith, love and vanity are all put to the test at the dining room table in this daring and funny film.

**Spanish with English subtitles, 35mm, 98 min**

## **BALLAST**

*d. Lance Hammer, USA 2007 CF*

**30 Nouveau 18h00; 02 Suncoast 20h45**

Perhaps the most accomplished and flawless feature film debut of the year, Lance Hammer's extraordinary *Ballast* won both Best Director and Best Cinematography awards at Sundance. Poetic and understated, *Ballast* looks at the lives of a fractured African-American family in the Mississippi Delta. Single mother Marlee struggles to support her young son, James, who is constantly getting into trouble. A suicide leads to more interaction with Marlee's brother-in-law, Lawrence, himself damaged by recent events. Forced together, by circumstance, the three must overcome their suspicions to co-exist and make something of their lives.

**English, 35mm, 96 min**

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## **THE BANISHMENT (IZGNANIE)**

*d. Andrey Zvyagintsev, Russia 2007 PF*

**31 Nouveau 20h15; 03 Musgrave 20h00**

Zvyagintsev, whose fantastic debut, *The Return*, won him the best director prize at DIFF 2005, again focuses on the family in his extraordinary follow-up. A husband, wife and their two children take a holiday in the countryside, and seem happy enough in the beautiful natural surrounds. But it soon becomes clear that something is seriously wrong, and there is great tension between the husband and wife. The idyll will soon give way to a deep and dark tragedy, one which is only gradually revealed in all its complexity. Each frame is perfectly composed and every performance a sublime one.

**Russian with English subtitles, 35mm, 150 min**

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## **BEFORE THE RAINS**

*d. Santosh Sivan, India/USA 2007 PF*

**01 Suncoast 20h30; 02 Sneddon 18h00**

Sivan (*The Terrorist, Asoka, Navarasa*) works on a larger scale here with this epic period piece. Linus Roache (*Priest*) plays Moores, an ambitious British landowner in 1930s Kerala who wishes to extend his plantation. Crucial to Moores getting things done is TK (Rahul Bose) a local fixer who makes all the necessary logistical arrangements. While Moores is married, he is also conducting a torrid affair with the beautiful servant Sajani (the incomparable Nandita Das). When his wife returns from England, Moores decides to end his affair with Sajani, who is herself married, but this is not so easily done and the consequences are tragic.

**English and Malayam with English subtitles, 35mm, 98 min**

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## **THE BIRD CAN'T FLY**

*d. Anna Threes, Netherlands/South Africa/Ireland 2007 CF*

**29 Sneddon 21h00; 02 Musgrave 18h00**

When middle-aged pastry chef Melody (an excellent Barbara Hershey) returns to her hometown of Fairlands to attend the funeral of her only daughter, she encounters a grandson named River she never knew she had. In the years since her last visit, the town has become virtually buried by the sand of the encroaching desert and nearly everyone has left or died. Melody's attempt to make sense of this desolate landscape and resolve her relationship with her grandson is set against the threat of an encroaching sandstorm. John Kani and Tony Kgoroge also deliver exceptional performances.

*Filmmakers in attendance*

**English, 35mm, 89 min**

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## **BLACK ICE (MUSTA JÄÄ)**

*d. Petri Kotwica, Finland/Germany 2007 PF*

**24 Musgrave 22h00; 26 Nouveau 16h00**

An edgy and gripping psychological thriller, *Black Ice's* classicism and careful craftsmanship are reminiscent of an earlier time in cinema. Set against the gorgeous frozen landscape around Helsinki, the film details a wife's arc of vengeance against the rival for her husband's attention. When the hyper-intelligent Saara discovers that Leo is having an affair, she tracks down the other woman. Masquerading as a psychologist, she becomes her friend and confidante, gathering information which she will eventually use in a dangerous game of life and death.

**Finnish with English subtitles, 35mm, 100 min**

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## **CAPTAIN ABU RAED**

*d. Amin Matalqa, Jordan 2007*

**31 Musgrave 20h00; 02 Suncoast 16h15**

The first feature film to emerge from Jordan in more than two decades is also one destined for international success, with early talk of an Oscar nomination. Amin Matalqa's charming film is beautifully acted and conceived. Abu Raed is a lonely airport janitor in Amman. One day he finds a discarded captain's hat, and innocently puts it on. Some of the neighbourhood kids see him and insist, despite his protests, that he tell them stories about his international adventures. The erudite Raed indulges them, and in so doing gives them hope and inspiration.

*Filmmaker in attendance*

**Arabic with English subtitles, 35mm, 110 min**

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## **CHERRY BLOSSOMS – HANAMI (KIRSCHBLÜTEN – HANAMI)**

*d. Doris Dorrie, Germany 2008 PF*

**31 Sneddon 20h00; 02 Nouveau 20h30**

Poetic, beautiful and heartbreaking, *Cherry Blossoms* follows a grieving widower's journey to Japan where he finds a new understanding of both his late wife and himself. When Trudi learns that her husband Rudi is terminally ill, she conceals the diagnosis from him, and instead persuades him to join her on a trip to Japan to visit their son. And then Trudi dies quietly in her sleep. Grief-stricken, Rudi heads for Tokyo in search of his son and the transcendent beauty of the cherry blossom festival. Dörrie reconfirms her exceptional talent with this tender, emotionally intense and profoundly moving story of love.

**English and German with English subtitles, 35mm, 122 min**

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## **CONTROL**

*d. Anton Corbijn, UK 2007 CF*

**25 Musgrave 20h00; 02 Musgrave 20h00**

Acclaimed rock photographer Corbijn has created an insightful, funny and tragic film about the legendary English post-punk band, Joy Division. In beautiful monochrome, *Control* looks at the life of the late Ian Curtis, the enigmatic lead singer of Joy Division, spanning Curtis' last several years leading up to his tragic suicide in 1980, and the struggle between his enduring love for his wife and his burgeoning relationship with his girlfriend, his decimating bouts with epilepsy, his incredible talent and all consuming performances with Joy Division. The winner of more than 25 awards internationally.

**English, 35mm, 121 min**

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## DIVIZIONZ

*d. Yes! That's Us, Uganda/South Africa 2008 PF*

**24 Suncoast 22h15; 27 Ekhaya 18h00**

A rare film from Uganda, and an Official Selection at this year's Berlin Film Festival, *Divizionz* is a heady mix of drama and hip hop. Kapo, Bana, Kanyankole and Mulokole are four aspiring musicians, who are on the verge of a big breakthrough. But there are many obstacles in the way, and the four constantly get into trouble, with others, and each other. Shot on a very low budget, *Divizionz* is a new kind of African film, one focused on urban youth and capturing the mayhem and the beauty of life in the big city.

*Filmmakers in attendance*

**Luganda with English subtitles, 35mm, 89 min**

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## DP 75-TARTINA CITY

*d. Serge Issa Coelo, Chad/France 2007 CF*

**26 Suncoast 14h00; 27 Suncoast 16h00**

In an unnamed African country, the torture of political prisoners is routine. Adoum, a journalist, is on his way to Europe when he is detained at the airport while in possession of an incriminating letter. He is taken to notorious underground cells run by Colonel Koulbou. Koulbou is a terribly cruel sadist, who enjoys machine-gunning prisoners. As Adoum's girlfriend and friends desperately try to find him, help comes from a surprising source: Koulbou's wife. Unrelenting and disturbing, *DP 75-Tartina City* is a scathing attack on governments that defy their own laws, and a rousing argument for press freedom.

**Arabic, French and German with English subtitles, 35mm, 88 min**

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## DUNYA & DESIE

*d. Dana Nechushtan, The Netherlands 2008 PF*

**01 Suncoast 11h00; 03 Suncoast 14h00**

*Dunya & Desie* is a heartwarming road movie about best friends Dunya and Desie. Dunya is Moroccan, raised with Ramadan, Imams and Mecca. Desie is as Dutch as cheese and tulips. On her 18th birthday, Dunya learns that her family wants her to get married to a cousin in Morocco. Against her will, she must go to Morocco to meet her future husband. At the same time, Desie discovers that she's pregnant and decides to seek out her biological father who lives in Morocco. It is there that the two will need to make big decisions on the future of their lives.

**Dutch with English subtitles, 35mm, 94 min**

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## EAT, FOR THIS IS MY BODY (MANGE, CECI EST MON CORPS)

*d. Michelange Quay, Haiti/France 2007 PF*

**01 Suncoast 16h00; 03 Sneddon 16h00**

This surreal non-linear film from Quay is tenaciously independent in its vision. Both exhilarating and confounding, *Eat, For This is My Body* is a challenging and visually impressive film that explores Haiti and its tumultuous history. The film centres on the twisted relationship between a white woman (Sylvie Testud) and a group of black children who filter into her ghostly home. The events that follow offer a sinister expression of Haiti's colonial legacy. Dreamlike, the film explores what Quay calls "the generations inside of me". Quay's visual poem is a remarkable experiment in avant-garde formalism.

**French with English subtitles, 35mm, 105 min**

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## THE EDGE OF HEAVEN (AUF DER ANDEREN SEITE)

d. Fatih Akin, Germany/Turkey 2007 PF

24 Sneddon 20h00; 29 Suncoast 22h15

Fatih Akin (*Head On*) works on an ambitious scale in this brilliantly-acted drama which has won a slew of prizes. Retired widower Ali finds a solution to loneliness when he places prostitute Yeter on a retainer to live with him. His professor son, Nejat, is not pleased but soon grows fond of Yeter, especially when he discovers that she sends money to her student daughter back in Turkey. When Yeter is accidentally killed, Nejat goes to Turkey in search of the daughter, Ayten. But Ayten, on the run from Turkish police, has fled to Germany. Sensuous, political and emotionally warm, this film offers bounteous rewards.

*English, Turkish and German with English subtitles, 35mm, 122 min*

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## ESTOMAGO – A GASTRONOMIC LOVE STORY (ESTÔMAGO)

d. Marco Jorge, Brazil/Italy 2007 CF

29 Musgrave 20h00; 01 Nouveau 20h45

In Marco Jorge's audacious film, the story of the rise of an idiot savant with a sublime talent for haute cuisine cooking is told twice - once when the protagonist is in prison, and once as a flashback to when he was still a free man. Jorge intercuts the two storylines with fluidity, constantly keeping viewers guessing about the conclusions. Both a sexy mix of comedy, good food and violence and a charming fable about the relativity of happiness, the film will stir your various hungers. *Estômago* is that rare film which will satisfy both foodies and lovers of gangster flicks.

*Filmmaker in attendance*

*Portuguese with English subtitles, 35mm, 113 min*

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## EXODUS

d. Penny Woolcock, UK 2007 PF

25 Suncoast 22h30; 28 Suncoast 20h00

A chilling look into the not so distant future, *Exodus* transposes the Biblical story to England. A neo-fascist politician clears the streets of immigrants confining them in a ghetto called Dreamland. But when his adopted son, Moses discovers that his real parents are imprisoned refugees, his attempts to help them escape result in a catastrophic war in which the oppressed resort to brutal means to win their freedom. *Exodus* is an eloquent skewering of the rising tide of right wing politics in Europe, and elsewhere, and a condemnation of xenophobia.

*English, 35mm, 105 min*

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## FAMILY MOTEL

d. Helene Klodawsky, Canada 2007

27 Ekhaya 12h00; 02 Luthuli 13h00

With tremendous performances by a family of non-actors, *Family Motel* is an uncompromising look at the struggles of a Somali family in Canada. Ayan is a Somalian refugee who has just moved to Canada and is trying to provide for her teenage daughters, Nasrah and Leila. Though Ayan has two jobs, she struggles to meet the rent payments while continuing to send money to the rest of the family back in Africa. An eviction notice follows and soon the family is struggling in a motel room. It is here that Nasrah meets a friend who is not what he seems, and Ayan is faced with losing everything.

*English, Video, 88 min*

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## **FARO – GODDESS OF THE WATERS (FARO, LA REINE DES EAUX)**

*d. Salif Traore, France/Canada/Germany/Mali/Burkina Faso 2007 PF* **24 Sneddon 18h00; 27 Sneddon 12h00**

Modernity and tradition clash in Traoré's excellent debut feature. Zanga, a child born out of wedlock, returns to the village of his birth, having been forced out years earlier. He returns as a successful engineer to help the village using his engineering skills and to pry out of his mother the identity of his father. After a dangerous incident in the river, the superstitious villagers insist that it is Zanga's return that has angered Faro, the river spirit. Zanga has to once again stand up to superstition and patriarchal oppression. Traoré is a great new talent in African cinema.

**Bambara with English subtitles, 35mm, 96 min**

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## **FLOWER IN THE POCKET**

*d. Liew Seng Tat, Malaysia 2007 PF*

**30 Suncoast 11h00; 02 Nouveau 12h00**

The Malaysian new wave continues to impress with this delicate film about a family struggling to connect with each other. The two young boys Li Aih and Li Ohm grow up motherless and are neglected by their father Sui, a workaholic who spends the bulk of his time mending broken mannequins in his workshop. While he shuts himself out from the world, the two brothers roam the streets, get into fights and other troubles in school but, all they want is to be loved. A prize-winner at several festivals, including Pusan and Rotterdam.

**Mandarin and Malay with English subtitles, Video, 97 min**

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## **FOSTER CHILD**

*d. Brillante Mendoza, Philippines 2007 CF*

**27 Suncoast 20h00; 28 Nouveau 18h00**

The prolific Mendoza (*The Masseur, Summer Heat*) takes a different tack in this loving and moving film about the Manlangqui family, who take in foster children and raise them until they are adopted. The mother (Cherry Pie Picache, DIFF 2007 Best Actress winner), frequently collects the Foster Mother of the Year award and its easy to see why. The film is a day in the life of the family as they prepare for the adoption of the young John-John. The meeting with the prospective American parents culminates in a moment of unforgettable emotion. Unmissable. Mendoza's *Slingshot* also appears at the festival.

*Filmmaker in attendance*

**Tagalog with English subtitles, 35mm, 97 min**

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## **FROZEN**

*d. Shivjee Chandrabhushan, India 2007 CF*

**30 Suncoast 20h00; 01 Suncoast 18h00**

A striking debut, and unlike any film you would ever have seen from India, *Frozen* has at its centre a poor family living in the foothills of the Himalayas. The landscape is utterly gorgeous but the lives of the protagonists are less idyllic. Single father Karma is unable to keep up with the changing world around him. Not only is he unable to pay off his loans (one of the loan sharks has his eye on Karma's beautiful young daughter, Lasya) but the Indian military has its sights on his property. Chandrabhushan has proved himself as a distinctive new voice in Indian cinema.

*Filmmaker in attendance*

**Hindi and Ladakhi with English subtitles, 35mm, 110 min**

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## FROZEN RIVER

d. Courtney Hunt, USA 2007 PF

31 Sneddon 18h00; 03 Musgrave 18h00

Winner of the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance, *Frozen River* is about the bond between two single mothers who are both trying desperately to support their families. Eddy's husband has left, having gambled away the family's savings, leaving her unable to meet her monthly financial commitments. She meets Lila, a Mohawk woman, who makes a living smuggling illegal immigrants into the US. Lila is in need of a car, and Eddy happens to have one, and together they begin smuggling immigrants over the frozen St Lawrence River. *Frozen River* is one of the year's most affecting films.

English, Video, 97 min

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## FUGITIVE PIECES

d. Jeremy Podeswa, Canada/Greece 2007 PF

27 Sneddon 20h00; 03 Musgrave 16h00

Podeswa, whose film *The Five Senses* played at the festival, and a regular director of *Six Feet Under*, has taken on Anne Michaels' bestselling novel. The result is a beautifully shot film about redemption and humaneness. While conducting an archaeological dig in Nazi-occupied Poland, Athos discovers a young boy whose family has been massacred. He secrets the boy to Greece and lovingly raises him. When they move to Canada, and as the boy grows up, his past continues to haunt him, especially the fate of his beloved sister who went missing all those years ago.

English, 35m, 104 min

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## GARAGE

d. Lenny Abrahamson, Ireland 2007 CF

28 Musgrave 20h00; 01 Sneddon 18h00

The winner of many awards, *Garage* is a pitch-perfect film with a tremendous performance by lead actor Pat Shortt. Set in the mid-west of Ireland, it tells the story of harmless misfit Josie (Shortt), the lonely but optimistic caretaker of a crumbling petrol station. Over the course of a summer, Josie's world shifts. A teenager, David, comes to work with him and they become friends. At the same time, Carmel, from the local shop, stirs feelings within Josie that he struggles to name. Then one thoughtless moment unravels the threads of faltering friendship and Josie's life is changed, forever.

English, 35mm, 85 min

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## GARDENS OF THE NIGHT

d. Damian Harris, USA/UK 2007 CF

26 Nouveau 20h00; 02 Suncoast 18h30

This shocking film tells the story of a young girl named Leslie who is abducted into the sex slave industry in America. Through a series of extended flashbacks, the film documents the lives of terror and abandonment to which Leslie and countless other children are subjected. After her abduction, Leslie ends up confined in a grimy house with a young boy called Donnie. Their emotional bond with each other becomes the only survival mechanism at their disposal. With superb performances by John Malkovich, Tom Arnold, Kevin Zeqers, Gillian Jacobs and Evan Ross.

English, 35mm, 110 min

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## THE GIRL BY THE LAKE (RAGAZZA DEL LAGO)

d. Andrea Molaioli, Italy 2007 PF

24 Musgrave 20h00; 27 Nouveau 18h00

Winner of the Best Film prize at Italy's national film awards, this terse thriller takes place in an idyllic town in contemporary Italy. The nude corpse of a young girl is found beside an alpine lake, and Sanzio, a middle aged police officer, is placed in charge of the investigation. The investigation throws up a number of suspects, each adding to the list of questions. But Sanzio has other problems. He is nearing the end of his career and his extremely ill wife cannot even recognise him. As he pursues the cases, he discovers some disturbing truths.

*Italian with English subtitles, 35mm, 95 min*

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## GLORY TO THE FILMMAKER! (KANTOKU BANZAI!)

d. Takeshi Kitano, Japan 2007 CF

24 Sneddon 22h15; 27 Suncoast 22h15

Following his frankly insane *Takeshis*, DIFF favourite Kitano (*Hana-Bi*, *Kikujiro*, *Zatoichi*) returns with another hilarious, self-deprecating deconstruction of himself. Renouncing the violent yakuza flicks that made his name, a version of Kitano tries every imaginable genre: sci-fi, romance, an Ozu-like film about a family and horror. It does not end well, and soon our hapless director is not only in search of a hit film, but also a way to save the world. Gloriously irreverent fun.

*Japanese with English subtitles, 35mm, 104 min*

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## GOD MAN DOG (LIO LANG SHEN GO REN)

d. Singing Chen, Taiwan 2007 CF

30 Nouveau 20h30; 02 Nouveau 16h00

Touching and visually elegant, *God Man Dog* tells the disparate stories of several individuals whose lives intersect. We meet a middle class married couple who have drifted apart since the cot-death of their child, a fruit dealer and his wife who together battle the husband's alcoholism, a young woman who works out her aggressions through kickboxing, a young parentless boy who roams the streets, and the lonely truck driver whose chief comfort is the Buddhas he transports. Chen subtly examines the conflict between economic stability and inner calm, and this exquisitely beautiful film explores the real value of life.

*Filmmaker in attendance*

*Mandarin with English subtitles, 35mm, 119 min*

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## GOMORRAH (GOMORRA)

d. Matteo Garrone, Italy 2008 PF

01 Nouveau 18h15; 03 Suncoast 18h00

Winner of the Grand Prix at this year's Cannes Film Festival, *Gomorrah* takes an unflinching look at the Neapolitan Camorra, the dangerous crime network that runs rampant in the Italian region. Based on the international bestseller by Roberto Saviano, who is now forced to live in hiding, *Gomorrah* focuses on Naples' version of the Sicilian Mafia and their iron grip on the economy of the region. Without glamorising the gangsters, the film depicts the societal conditions which lead to young men entering a life of crime, the internecine wars between Camorra factions, and the brutal violence which is commonplace.

*Italian with English subtitles, 35mm, 135 min*

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## HAFEZ

d. Abolfazl Jalili, Iran/Japan 2007 PF

26 Suncoast 20h00; 27 Suncoast 14h00

DIFF favourite Jalili, winner of the 2006 DIFF Best Film prize for *Full Or Empty*, returns with a fairytale about love, devotion, rebellion and poetry. Hafez is a young student of the Koran who is asked to teach religion to the beautiful Nabat, but from a different room. Hafez can't resist looking at Nabat, is found out, and is severely punished before being cast out. But his love is pure, and even as Nabat's marriage is being arranged, she yearns for Hafez. Inspired by the life and work of the great sufi poet, Hafez, this is a masterpiece.

Filmmaker in attendance

**Farsi with English subtitles; 35mm, 98 min**

## HAPPY-GO-LUCKY

d. Mike Leigh, UK 2007 PF

02 Suncoast 18h00; 03 Sneddon 20h00

A hit at this year's Berlin Film Festival, Mike Leigh's delightful comedy is about Poppy, a teacher from London who is just perfectly happy. An eternal optimist and enthusiast, Poppy tries to spread her good cheer to all around her, with varying degrees of success. Poppy's altruism sometimes leads her into personal danger and awkward situations, but she always manages to find a solution and keep a smile on her face. For her great performance, Sally Potter won the Best Actress Award in Berlin. A wonderful, life-affirming film *Happy-Go-Lucky* will inspire you to see the best in everyone, yourself included.

**English, 35mm, 118 min**

## A HERO'S WELCOME (NACHT VOR AUGEN)

d. Brigitte Maria Bertele, Germany 2008 CF

29 Suncoast 18h00; 02 Suncoast 18h00

*A Hero's Welcome* examines the effect of the Iraq and Afghanistan war on a single soldier. 25-year-old German David returns home after a tour of duty in Afghanistan, and is welcomed as a hero. But David has changed into a cold and withdrawn person, and a decoration for his heroism drags him even further into himself. His girlfriend, mother and, especially, his little brother face the brunt of the consequences. Bertele makes a strong feature film debut as she explores the psychology of war and trauma with remarkable precision.

Filmmaker in attendance

**German with English subtitles, 35mm, 91 min**

## I SERVED THE KING OF ENGLAND

d. Jiri Menzel, Czech Republic/Slovakia 2007 PF

27 Suncoast 14h00; 03 Musgrave 12h00

Oscar-winner Jiri Menzel's *I Served The King Of England* is a viciously dark comedy about the ambitions of an apolitical waiter who wants desperately to be rich as Europe goes through its greatest upheaval. The diminutive Jan Dite moves from job to job – from pub, to brothel, to more salubrious establishments – always aiming to one day own his own hotel. An energetic sex life aside, Jan remains focused on his plan, marries a Nazi sympathiser and inherits a great deal of money. A run-in with the Communists leaves Jan in jail for a long time, and on his release he finally reflects on the decisions he made to get to the top.

**Czech with English subtitles, 35mm, 120 min**

## JERUSALEMA

d. Ralph Ziman, South Africa/USA 2008 CF

23 Suncoast 19h00; 26 Sneddon 20h00

Young carjacker Lucky Kunene (Rapulana Seiphemo) dreams of bigger things. When he moves to Hillbrow, Kunene quickly becomes a real-estate crime boss, constantly evading both the law and the vengeful wrath of other local criminals. Ralph Ziman provides a political context for his narrative, acknowledging the continuing repercussions of apartheid on the life of Johannesburg. Despite revelling in its love of the genre, the film maintains a distinct South African voice with a winning performance from Seiphemo at its centre. *Jerusalem* is as fast, edgy and energetic as the urban landscapes in which it takes place.

Filmmaker in attendance

English, 35mm, 118 min

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## LAND OF THIRST

d. Meg Rickards, South Africa 2008 PF

29 Sneddon 18h00; 30 Ekhaya 18h00

Produced by Durban-based Vuleka Productions, and based on Perceval Gibbon's novel *Margaret Harding, Land Of Thirst* is a beautifully staged historical romance set in the Karoo in 1913. Margaret (Nina Lucy Wyld) leaves England and moves to Africa for the treatment of her tuberculosis in the dry air of the Karoo, while Khanyiso (Hlomla Dandala), having been exiled following the execution of his father, a Xhosa chief, returns from England in search of his African roots. Romance flourishes for them, but can they keep their love alive in such a hostile world?

Filmmaker in attendance

English and Xhosa with English subtitles, Video, 99 min

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## LEATHERHEADS

d. George Clooney, USA 2008 PF

27 Musgrave 20h00; 30 Sneddon 21h15

While *Confessions Of A Dangerous Mind* and the exquisite *Good Night And Good Luck* were serious examinations of key periods in American history, Clooney's third is much lighter fare. This hilarious comedy is set in the 1920s in the world of professional American football. Clooney plays Dodge Connolly, a football player whose team is facing collapse. He has the great idea to recruit a real-life war hero into the team and there is soon a huge turnaround. But a nosy reporter, Lexie (Renée Zellweger) decides to investigate the war heroics, and an inevitable love triangle is the consequence.

English, 35mm, 111 min

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## LEMON TREE

d. Eran Riklis, Israel/Germany/France 2008 CF

25 Musgrave 18h00; 29 Nouveau 20h00

The great Palestinian actress Hiam Abbas (*Paradise Now, The Syrian Bride*) is at the centre of this subtle and heartbreaking film, a hit at this year's Berlin Film Festival. She plays Salma, a Palestinian widow who makes a living from a small lemon tree grove. When the Israeli Minister of Defence moves in next door, her grove is deemed a security threat and ordered razed. Determined to protect her family heritage, Salma decides to take on the might of the Israeli state. As a frowned-upon romance blooms for Salma, she also begins receiving subtle support from the wife of the Minister. Riklis (*Syrian Bride*) has made a gentle masterpiece in analysing an explosive situation.

Hebrew and Arabic with English subtitles, 35mm, 106 min

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## LEO

d. Josef Fares, Sweden 2007 PF

27 Suncoast 12h00; 28 Sneddon 22h30

Talented, young Swedish director Josef Fares (*Kops, Zozo*) takes on friendship, loyalty and revenge in this extraordinary film shot on handheld cameras. Leo's 30th birthday party goes wonderfully well as he celebrates with his family, girlfriend and friends. On the way home, Leo and his girlfriend run into some gangsters. The tragic repercussions of this chance encounter leave Leo devastated, and he turns to his closest friends to help him. Convincingly acted by a group of actual friends, who also improvised the script, *Leo* is an exquisite example of small-scale, highly personal filmmaking.

**Swedish with English subtitles, 35mm, 78 min**

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## THE MAN FROM LONDON

d. Bela Tarr, Hungary/Germany/France 2007 PF

28 Sneddon 18h00; 03 Nouveau 20h00

The Hungarian master, Bela Tarr (*Satantango, Werckmeister Harmonies*) has made a thriller unlike any other. A patient study of greed, and one man's reaction to an opportunity that could forever change his life, the film presents a series of unforgettable images in long, languorous takes. Maloin witnesses a murder, and then finds a suitcase filled with money. It is more money than he could ever expect to earn. Soon there are investigations afoot, and Maloin's simple existence is thrown into turmoil. In stark black and white, and featuring a great performance by Tilda Swinton.

**Hungarian with English subtitles, 35mm, 135 min**

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## MISTER LONELY

d. Harmony Korine, UK/France/Ireland/USA 2007 PF

26 Musgrave 22h00; 27 Sneddon 22h00

Harmony Korine's third film (after *Gummo* and *Julien Donkey Boy*) reaffirms him as one of cinema's bravest and most idiosyncratic voices. *Mr Lonely* stars Diego Luna as a Michael Jackson impersonator eking out an existence in Paris. He meets a Marilyn Monroe impersonator (Samantha Morton) who invites him to visit a commune in Scotland where she lives with a dozen or so impersonators. Here The Pope, The Queen of England, Madonna, James Dean and others work together towards creating the greatest show on earth. With an absurd cameo by Werner Herzog, *Mister Lonely* is very funny, very tender and very special.

**English, 35mm, 112 min**

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## THE MOST DISTANT COURSE (ZUI YAO YUAN DE JU LI)

d. Lin Jing-jie, Taiwan 2007 PF

30 Musgrave 18h00; 03 Nouveau 12h00

This languid and affecting road movie showcases the sights and sounds of Taiwan as it documents three separate lives stranded from their full potential by alienation and heartbreak. Xiao Tang is a young sound recordist who isn't coping well with life. Cai is a psychiatrist whose role-playing habits extend beyond his practice, and Wu Ruoyun is a sad, young office worker who finds solace in audio tapes containing ambient sounds. The film watches these three characters as they journey around the country following the sounds on the tapes. Winner of the Critic's Week Award at Venice.

**Mandarin with English subtitles, 35mm, 113 min**

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## THE MOURNING FOREST

d. Naomi Kawase, Japan 2007 PF

27 Sneddon 14h00; 01 Sneddon 22h15

The winner of the Grand Prize in Cannes, and several other awards, *The Mourning Forest* traces the emotional connection between an ageing widower and a young woman who works at the retirement home in which he lives. Shikegi, still mourns his wife who died some three decades ago, while Machiko bears a secret grief of her own. On Shigeki's birthday Machiko decides to take him for a drive in the countryside. When Shikegi darts off, Machiko follows, and it is on this long walk that each of them will finally find peace. A patient, lyrical film for cineastes.

*Japanese with English subtitles, 35mm, 97 min*

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## MUNYURANGABO

d. Lee Isaac Chung, USA/Rwanda 2007 CF

25 Suncoast 18h30; 29 Nouveau 18h00

Korean-American Chung has made what has been described in *Variety* as "the finest and truest film yet on the moral and emotional repercussions of the ... genocide that wracked Rwanda." After stealing a machete in Kigali, friends Munyurangabo and Sangwa leave the city on a journey tied to their pasts. Munyurangabo wants justice for his parents who were killed in the genocide, and Sangwa wants to visit the home he deserted years ago. They spend a few days at Sangwa's parents house, and it is there that tribal tensions begin to surface and threaten.

*Kinyrwanada with English subtitles, 35mm, 97 min*

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## MUTUM

d. Sandra Kogut, Brazil/France 2007 PF

28 Sneddon 20h30; 02 Sneddon 14h00

With an exceptional performance from non actor Thiago Da Silva Mariz at its centre, *Mutum* tells the story of a fragmented family and the slow pressures of rural life. All is not well with young Thiago's family. It would appear that his mother has had an affair with his father's brother, and the family is split as a consequence. The film paints a moving portrait of the innocence and vulnerability of childhood. Taking place in the desolate plains and dark forests of Brazil, Kogut conceived of the film as existing on the border between documentary and fiction.

*Portuguese with English subtitles, 35mm, 95 min*

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## MY BLACK LITTLE HEART

d. Claire Angeliq, Denmark/Germany/South Africa 2007 PF

25 Sneddon 22h00; 30 Musgrave 22h15

World Premiere. Telling the tale of a heroin user/dancer on the streets of Durban, *My Black Little Heart* is beautifully shot by Anthony Dod Mantle (behind the camera of many of Lars Von Trier's films). Using mostly non-actors, the film's dark subject matter finds its counterpoint in its dreamlike and non-linear narrative. Exploring the underbelly of Durban, it chronicles both a deeply personal narrative and a city in transition. With a soundtrack by Chris Letcher and a resonating local narrative, the film presents a thoroughly original view of the world. Durban has never looked more beautiful or more ugly.

*Filmmaker in attendance*

*English, Video, 90 min*

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## NAMIBIA: THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION

d. Charles Burnett, Namibia 2007 PF

30 Sneddon 18h00; 03 Suncoast 20h30

Directed by legendary African-American director, Charles Burnett, who takes advantage of the gorgeous Namibian landscape, this epic tells the story of Sam Nujoma, the first president of Namibia. Charting the future leader's political awakening and his part in the country's fight for freedom from occupation by South Africa, Namibia showcases the acting talents of Carl Lumbly and Danny Glover. A detailed telling of the struggle, and covering more than six decades of history, the film culminates with Namibia's hard-won independence in 1990.

**English, Oshi Ovambo, Oshi Herero, Damara>Nama, Afrikaans, German, Russian and Chinese with English subtitles, 35mm, 161 min**

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## NIRVANA

d. Igor Voloshin, Russia 2008 PF

26 Sneddon 22h30; 03 Musgrave 14h00

Outrageously stylish, *Nirvana* is about crime, addiction and excess. Alisa, a nurse who migrates from Moscow to St Petersburg, moves into a building inhabited by lowlifes and drug users where she meets a bartender named Vel and her boyfriend, Valera. Valera and Alisa embark on a sordid affair while Vel is at work. When she discovers their indiscretion, she loses it, but the two women are forced to unite when they discover that their mutual lover has been kidnapped, and they descend into the dark underworld of St Petersburg to rescue him.

**Russian with English subtitles, 35mm, 89 min**

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## NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

d. John Kani, South Africa 2008 CF

24 Ekhaya 18h00; 26 Sneddon 18h00

World premiere. Shot in and around Durban, and based on Kani's popular play, *Nothing But The Truth* considers the vital issue of the relationships between political exiles and those who remained in South Africa during the apartheid years, and contextualises this dichotomy within a troubled family. Librarian, Siphso Makhaya (Kani), must bury his political hero brother, who died in London. The remains are delivered by his niece Mandisa (Rosie Motene). But what should be a dignified funeral, soon turns into something altogether different as dark secrets from the past surface.

*Filmmakers in attendance*

**English, Video, 81 min**

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## OUR TIME (KAAL)

d. Bappaditya Bandopadhyay, India 2007 PF

25 Suncoast 16h00; 03 Suncoast 16h00

A music student, an illegal immigrant, a sister of a prostitute and a young widow are all victims of human trafficking in *Our Time*, Bandopadhyay's impassioned film. The film documents the lives of the women trapped in the world of human trafficking. Betrayed in love and by their family members, they are forced into new lives in the city where their dreams must change. Things take a dramatic turn when a European woman, herself a victim of trafficking, begins sharing their apartment. *Our Time* is a fascinating, multilayered look at lives torn asunder by the forces of globalisation.

**Bengali with English subtitles, 35mm, 120 min**

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## PARANOID PARK

*d. Gus van Sant, France 2007 PF*

**25 Sneddon 20h00; 02 Suncoast 22h30**

In his latest shimmering masterpiece van Sant returns to his home city of Portland. At *Paranoid Park*'s centre is a tragic event which takes place in the train yard next to the Burnside Skate Park. Alex, a teen skater whose main concerns are his parents' imminent divorce and his girlfriend, whom he has reluctantly agreed to deflower, accidentally causes the death of a security guard. With the police getting closer and closer, the pressure on Alex grows unbearable. A grittily delicate and moving piece of work from one of cinema's most compassionate and gifted talents.

*English, 35mm, 90 min*

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## PLEASURE FACTORY (KUAILE GONGCHANG)

*d. Ekachai Uekrongtham, Singapore/Thailand 2007 PF*

**29 Musgrave 22h15; 31 Sneddon 22h15**

Inspired by true stories, *Pleasure Factory* tells an intimate and seductive tale involving pleasure seekers and pleasure providers in Geylang, Singapore's red light district. In the course of one night, an army boy loses his virginity with the help of his experienced buddy; a girl gets initiated into the pleasure manufacturing process; and a jaded prostitute pays a young busker money in exchange for a song he never gets to sing. Frank in its depiction of sex, *Pleasure Factory* is a daring and uncompromising look at the underbelly of the legendarily clean city state of Singapore.

*English, Mandarin, Tagalog, Cantonese with English subtitles, 35mm, 88 min*

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## PLOY

*d. Pen-ek Ratanaruang, Thailand 2007 PF*

**27 Musgrave 22h15; 31 Musgrave 22h15**

DIFF favourite Ratanaruang (*Mon-rak Transistor, Last Life In The Universe*) is back with a terse thriller set almost entirely in a hotel. Wit and his wife Dang return to Bangkok from America and settle into their fancy hotel. When Wit goes downstairs for a pack of cigarettes, he meets a sexy young girl named Ploy, who is waiting for her mother. Wit invites the girl back to his room for her to rest, but this makes Dang deeply suspicious, and the jealousy grows as the hours pass. Meanwhile, elsewhere in the hotel, a barman and a chambermaid duck into a room for a steamy sexual liaison.

*Thai with English subtitles, 35mm, 107 min*

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## THE POPE'S TOILET (EL BANO DEL PAPA)

*d. Enrique Fernandez and Cesar Charlone, Uruguay/Brazil/France 2007 PF*

**26 Musgrave 14h00; 02 Nouveau 14h00**

Tragedy and comedy collide in this gem from Uruguay. The Pope's impending visit to a small town generates a frenzy as the very poor local residents sniff an opportunity to make a lot of money from the 50 000 expected pilgrims. The locals plan the preparation of mountains of sausage and cake, but small-time smuggler, Beto, thinks that he has the best idea of all: "The Pope's Toilet". After all, each of the 50 000 pilgrims will need the toilet at some point, and Beto's intention is to provide that invaluable service, at a cost of course.

*Spanish with English subtitles, Video, 97 min*

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## RUN BABY RUN

d. Emmanuel Apea Jr, Ghana/UK 2007 PF

26 Suncoast 12h00; 01 BAT 15h00

The big winner at the recent Africa Movie Academy Awards, *Run Baby Run* is a fast-paced and frequently humorous thriller set between London and Accra. Struggling to get by in London, Junior gets a welcome surprise when his pesky little sister visits from Accra. The surprise is that her suitcase has mistakenly been exchanged, and the new suitcase contains a vast amount of cocaine. Junior wastes no time in selling the drugs, and little more in spending a lot of the cash. But when the owners start tracking him down he must flee to Ghana, with his sister and English girlfriend in tow.

**English, Video, 110 min**

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## SECRET SUNSHINE (MIRYANG)

d. Lee Chang-dong, South Korea 2007 PF

24 Nouveau 20h15; 27 Nouveau 20h00

A deserved winner of the Best Actress award at Cannes, Jeon Do-yeon delivers an outstanding performance as Shina-ae, a recent widow who decides to move with her young son to her late husband's hometown. There she opens a piano school, but is irked by the town's gossip about her. She also receives unwanted attention from a potential suitor, a pharmacist who tries to convert her to Christianity, and a real-estate agent. An unbearable tragedy leads Shin-ae to Christianity but when that fails her, she wages a war against God.

**Korean with English subtitles, 35mm, 142 min**

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## SEVEN DAYS SUNDAY (SIEBEN TAGE SONNTAG)

d. Niels Laupert, Germany 2007 CF

24 Suncoast 20h30; 26 Musgrave 18h00

An accomplished first feature, *Seven Days Sunday* sensitively looks at a group of teenagers living in a council estate in Germany. Bored and without money, Adam and Tommek steal bottles of wine, get drunk and try to make out with the pretty girls. Adam is the sweet one, Tommek a bit of a thug, but still they are firm friends. The boredom escalates, as does the drunkenness, a dare gets out of hand, and the boys decide one night to kill someone, anyone. Laupert has a keen eye and deft hand and reveals himself as a talent to watch.

*Filmmaker in attendance*

**German with English subtitles, 35mm, 80 min**

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## SILENT LIGHT (STELLET LICHT)

d. Carlos Reygadas, Mexico/France/The Netherlands 2007 PF

28 Suncoast 22h00; 31 Suncoast 18h00

*Silent Light* begins with a miraculous shot that you will wish to see again and again, and is followed by a patient, visually splendid foray into the Mennonite community of Mexico. Reygadas (*Japon, Battle In Heaven*) looks at an act of infidelity within this religious community, and its grave repercussions. Johan, the transgressive farmer, is torn between his faith and his passion, between his lover and his wife and children. *Silent Light* ends as miraculously as it begins, and clearly marks Reygadas as one of the most visionary and ambitious filmmakers around today. Winner of more than 20 international awards.

**Plautdietsch with English subtitles, 35mm, 127 min**

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## SITA SINGS THE BLUES

d. Nina Paley, USA 2008 PF

26 Suncoast 18h00; 27 Suncoast 18h00

This beautifully animated film is a gloriously feminist take on *The Ramayana*, with a contemporary break-up tale told in parallel. Sita is a goddess separated from her beloved Lord and husband Rama. Nina is an animator whose husband moves to India, then dumps her by email. Three hilarious shadow puppets narrate both ancient tragedy and modern comedy in this very clever and funny film. Set to the 1920s jazz vocals of Annette Hanshaw, *Sita Sings the Blues* earns its tagline as "The Greatest Break-up Story Ever Told."

Filmmaker in attendance

English, 35mm, 82 min

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## THE SKY, THE EARTH AND THE RAIN (EL CIELO, LA TIERRA Y LA LLUVIA)

d. Jose Luis Torres Leiva, Chile/France/Germany 2008 PF

01 Nouveau 16h00; 03 Sneddon 12h00

This debut feature from Jose Luis Torres Leiva is another strikingly individual and cinematically pure addition to the new wave of Latin American cinema. Taking place on a small, sparsely populated island in Southern Chile, the film follows the lives of three woman and a man set against the island's quiet forests and isolating distances. They search for love, sex, filial affection, and their own space and time. With its lyricism and modesty, *The Sky, the Earth and the Rain* is a gently seductive film made with honesty and precision and bathed in beautiful silence.

Spanish, 35mm, 110 min

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## SLEEP DEALER

d. Alex Rivera, USA 2008 PF

30 Suncoast 22h15; 31 Suncoast 22h15

A winner of two prizes this year at Sundance, *Sleep Dealer* is a superior sci-fi thriller with an intelligent and decidedly political analysis of the future of the world's resources. Set in a near-future, militarised world where water is the most precious resource, borders are strictly closed, and people work in faraway places, not by moving there, but by plugging into a global digital network, *Sleep Dealer* follows one young man as he tries to make sense of this strange new world. The visuals are matched by a clever, sensitive screenplay and universally strong performances.

Spanish with English subtitles, 35mm, 88 min

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## SLINGSHOT

d. Brillante Mendoza, Philippines 2007 PF

26 Musgrave 16h00; 02 Musgrave 12h00

Mendoza has made, in *Slingshot*, a film so firmly anchored in the reality of poverty in Manila, that it has the feeling of a documentary. With a rapid-fire style, *Slingshot* takes us through the shacklands of Manila. Elections are approaching, and in the usual attempt to appear tough on crime, the police crack down on the local shack dwellers. These brutal shock tactics quickly ripple outwards into the community and Mendoza's large ensemble cast. Bouncing from story to story, Mendoza uses his frenetic and intimate camera to maximum effect. Honest and profoundly inspiring.

Filmmaker in attendance

Tagalog with English subtitles, Video, 86 min

## SON OF A LION

d. Benjamin Gilmour, Australia/Pakistan 2007 CF **26 Sneddon 16h00; 03 Sneddon 18h00; 29 Suncoast 11h00**

It is rather amazing that an Australian went into Pakistan's notoriously dangerous and violent North West Frontier Province, and emerged with this sublime and sensitive film. Benjamin Gilmour made *Son Of A Lion* virtually single-handedly and it is a remarkable achievement. A widowed father expects his son to go into the family business – making, testing and selling weapons. 11-year-old Niaz would much rather go to school, and the two clash constantly. Niaz is also being bullied, and in this region where revenge killings are commonplace, a matter of honour even, he finds himself in a perilous situation.

**Pashto with English subtitles, 35mm, 92 min**

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## SONG OF FREEDOM (CANTO DI LIBERTA)

d. Valerio D'Annunzio, Italy 2007 PF **26 Nouveau 18h00; 28 Musgrave 18h00**

*Song Of Freedom* tells the story of a famous and brilliant concert pianist who has repressed his lifelong urge to dress in women's clothing. As his life begins to draw to a close he realises that he can no longer live a lie, and tells his wife of his desires. It's astonishing to learn that this is a debut feature, so mature is it in both content and execution. *Song Of Freedom* is careful and confident and achieves a profound empathy with its characters. Beautifully filmed with a specially commissioned soundtrack, this is a jewel of modern Italian cinema.

Filmmaker in attendance

**Italian with English subtitles, 35mm, 98 min**

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## A SONG OF GOOD

d. Gregory King, New Zealand 2008 PF **26 Suncoast 14h00; 03 Nouveau 16h00**

Black comedy *A Song Of Good* is the story of 28-year-old Gary's struggle for redemption after committing a terrible crime. Mired in a world of drugs, alcohol and sex, Gary resorts to burglary to fuel his habits. During a burglary he attacks a woman. To make matters worse, his victim is his neighbour. Disgusted with himself, Gary decides to turn his life around, but he can find little support. A gritty, moving story, *A Song Of Good* is one of the most strikingly original New Zealand films in years.

**English, Video, 84 min**

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## SPARROW (MAN JEUK)

d. Johnnie To, Hong Kong/China 2008 PF **01 Musgrave 22h15; 03 Nouveau 18h00**

Prolific Hong Kong auteur Johnnie To has made a film short on violence, but high on charm in this delightful tale of a bunch of pickpockets and their unusual dalliance with a beautiful woman. Seasoned pickpocket, Kei, enjoys taking pictures with his vintage camera, and into his vision comes a mesmerising woman. He discovers that the woman is being kept by a rich businessman, who gives her virtually no room. Our bunch of pickpockets are determined to free her. A pure cinematic pleasure, *Sparrow* has one of the most exhilarating and unexpected duel scenes ever captured on film.

**Cantonese with English subtitles, 35mm, 87 min**

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## TENGRS

*d. Michael J. Rix, South Africa 2007 PF*

**27 Musgrave 18h00; 29 Ekhaya 18h00**

This irreverent animation, which was written, directed and produced by Michael Rix, uses claymation to tell a wickedly funny and disturbing story about Gauteng. Both a wrenching social drama and a biting comedy about life in the big city, *Tengers* is politically incorrect, very angry and, naturally, very funny. The hapless hero of the film is Rob, who is mistakenly arrested as a bank robber, before winning the lottery. Paranoid that the Lottery Service is trying to murder him to avoid paying out, Rob is soon on the run through the dangerous streets of Jozi.

*Filmmaker in attendance*

**English, Video, 68 min**

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## THE TRAP (KLOPKA)

*d. Srdan Golubovic, Serbia/Germany/Hungary 2006 PF*

**24 Nouveau 18h00; 02 Suncoast 12h00**

Mladen and his wife Marija are a middle class couple who barely get by. When their son develops a serious heart condition, the only thing that can save him is an operation abroad, costing 26 000 euros. With no way of raising the money themselves, the desperate parents place an ad in a newspaper. There is only one response: a man contacts Mladen and offers to pay the whole amount, just as long as Mladen kills one of his business rivals. Golubovic keeps the heart racing, but also makes some wry observations about the new Serbian society.

**Serbo-Croatian with English subtitles, 35mm, 106 min**

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## TRIOMF

*d. Michael Raeburn, South Africa/France 2008 PF*

**25 Suncoast 20h00; 27 Sneddon 18h00**

Michael Raeburn's much-anticipated *Triomf*, based on the Marlene Van Niekerk novel, is set during the days leading up to South Africa's first democratic election. The Benades, a poor white family, are so terrified by the advent of democracy that they are contemplating escape to the north. Alongside the political change, there is turmoil in the family as Uncle Treppie wishes to reveal a deep, dark and long-concealed secret, and chooses his disturbed nephew Lambert's 21st birthday as the day on which all will be revealed. Irreverent and dangerously dark.

*Filmmaker in attendance*

**Afrikaans with English subtitles, 35mm, 118 min**

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## UMALUSI

*d. Mandu Sikwebu, South Africa 2008 PF*

**29 Musgrave 18h00; 02 Ekhaya 18h00**

World premiere. A gripping drama about Malusi, a spoilt, urbane young man. Having lived a life of privilege, Malusi spends his days partying, drugging, driving his expensive car, and bedding as many women as he can. After a night of coke-fuelled revelry, he sleeps with his best friend's young sister. The night of fun ends badly when the girl dies of an overdose. Terrified, Malusi escapes the suburbs and takes refuge in a nearby township. It is here that he will learn some severe lessons. Refreshingly candid and unconventional.

*Filmmaker in attendance*

**English and Xhosa with English subtitles, Video, 76 min**

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## **UNDER THE BOMBS (SOUS LES BOMBES)**

*d. Philippe Aractingi, France/Lebanon/UK/Belgium 2007 PF* **01 Sneddon 16h00; 02 Musgrave 14h00**

Shot under extremely dangerous circumstances, *Under The Bombs* is a devastating look at the consequences of the recent Israeli attack on Lebanon. In the midst of a divorce, Dubai-based Zeina, sends her son to her sister in a small village in Lebanon to spare him the anguish. Days later, war breaks out, and a desperate Zeina heads to Lebanon in search of her son. In Beirut, there is only one taxi driver willing to take her to the South. It will be a journey that is sometimes hopeful, sometimes tragic, and one that ends in a climax that will leave you reeling.

*Arabic, English and French with English subtitles, Video, 98 min*

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## **UNFINISHED STORIES (RAVAYAT HAYE NA TAMAM)**

*d. Pourya Azarbayjani, Iran 2007 PF* **26 Sneddon 14h00; 03 Suncoast 14h00**

In this striking debut, we encounter three women on the streets of Tehran on one fateful night. The three women do not know each other, but each has nowhere to go, and each has a future that is very uncertain. Setareh has run away from home to elope with the man she loves, but he is nowhere to be found. Hengameh is pregnant, much to her husband's anger. She sets out to get an illegal abortion. Saiideh has just given birth. Unable to pay the hospital bill, she sneaks out and takes to the streets. Sympathetic and humane.

*Farsi with English subtitles, 35mm, 76 min*

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## **THE UNSEEABLE (PEN CHOO KUB PEE)**

*d. Wisit Sasanatieng, Thailand 2006 PF* **26 Suncoast 22h15; 01 Suncoast 22h15**

Challenged to come up with a horror film, the very talented Thai director Sasanatieng (*Tears Of The Black Tiger, Citizen Dog*) created this classy period piece, which for all its beauty is also terrifying. It is 1934 and a pregnant rural girl, who is looking for her husband, ends up at a mansion where she is taken in. All is not well at the mansion. The housekeeper and the mistress of the house are both menacing, there is some suspicious activity in the large garden, and things get even stranger when the baby is born.

*Thai with English subtitles, 35mm, 98 min*

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## **THE VOYEURS (AMI, YASIN AR AMAR MADHUBALA)**

*d. Buddhadeb Dasgupta, India 2007 PF* **26 Suncoast 16h00; 29 Suncoast 20h00**

The great Indian master Dasgupta, a frequent DIFF visitor, deftly moves between comedy and tragedy in this film which looks at technology and its role in human connection. Dilip is a computer whiz who specialises in installing security cameras linked to computers. Yasin, a friend from the village joins Dilip in the big city and moves in to his apartment. Another new arrival, in the flat next door, is the beautiful Rekha (Sameera Reddy), an aspiring dancer and actress. Dilip cannot resist and installs a surveillance camera in Rekha's room, with unexpected consequences.

*Filmmaker in attendance*

*Bengali with English subtitles, 35mm, 115 min*

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## WHAT ON EARTH HAVE I DONE WRONG?

d. Niu Chen-zer, Taiwan 2007 PF

31 Nouveau 18h00; 02 Nouveau 18h30

The accomplished actor Niu, who has worked with Hou Hsiao-hsien amongst others, always dreamt of making his own film, and this hilarious mockumentary details that life-altering process. Self-deprecating and extremely funny, the film looks at the notorious lengths a filmmaker will go to in order to get a film made. Scaly businessman, corrupt politicians, and pretty actresses are all fair game in the quest for cinema, and the director finds that in order to make a film, one has to fulfil many roles, including that of pimp. A glorious satire on the dirty business of filmmaking.

*Filmmaker in attendance*

**Mandarin with English subtitles, 35mm, 95 min**

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## WITH A GIRL OF BLACK SOIL (GEOMEUN TTANGUI SONYEOWA)

d. Jeon Soo-Il, South Korea 2007 PF

26 Nouveau 14h15; 28 Suncoast 18h00

Child actor Yu Yun-mi's gives an absolutely amazing turn as a 9-year-old girl with far too much responsibility to bear. Her older brother is mentally disabled and her miner father, terribly ill with lung disease is unable to work. Their home is about to be demolished, and all the father can manage is to drink away his sorrows. Scavenging food, trying to get some sort of education for her brother and medical treatment for her father, little Yeong-lim comes up with a drastic solution to their problems. A multiple prize winner, including at Venice, this is an unmissable film.

**Korean with English subtitles, 35mm, 89 min**

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## WOMAN'S HEART (CORAZONES DE MUJER)

d. Kiff Kossow, Italy 2008 PF

25 Nouveau 20h00; 27 Musgrave 16h00

Moroccan-Italian Zina is about to be married and is having a wedding gown made by the famous Shakira, a Moroccan transvestite who happens to be the best tailor of Arab clothing in Turin. As a fitting is going on, Zina bursts into tears: she is terrified of the marriage because she is no longer a virgin. There is only one solution: the two must set off from Turin to Casablanca, for this is where Zina can get a virginity restoration. Tradition dictates that Zina is back in Italy in a week, but their journey throws up complications.

*Filmmaker in attendance*

**Italian with English subtitles, 35mm, 85 min**

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## WONDERFUL TOWN

d. Aditya Assarat, Thailand 2007 PF

31 Musgrave 18h00; 02 Suncoast 14h00

Winner of the top prizes in Pusan and Rotterdam, the atmospheric *Wonderful Town* visits a ravaged town in Southern Thailand in the aftermath of the tsunami. Ton, an architect, comes to Takua Pa to supervise the reconstruction of a beach hotel. He rents a room in a small hotel run by Na, and eventually the two begin a secret love affair. Some in the town, which lost thousands of lives in the tsunami and thousands of jobs in the aftermath, are too angry to tolerate happiness for others, leading to a gripping and unexpected climax.

**Thai with English subtitles, 35mm, 92 min**

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## THE WORLD UNSEEN

*d. Shamim Sarif, UK/South Africa 2007 CF*

**31 Suncoast 20h00; 01 Musgrave 20h00**

A hit at the Toronto and London festivals, *The World Unseen* makes its South African premiere at DIFF. It is 1950s South Africa, in the early years of apartheid, and free-spirited Amina (Sheetal Sheth) has broken all the rules of her own Indian community, and the new apartheid government, by running a café with Jacob, her "coloured" business partner. When she meets Miriam (Lisa Ray), a young traditional wife and mother, their unexpected attraction pushes Miriam to question the rules that bind her. *The World Unseen* transports the viewer to a vibrant, colourful world that is universal in its themes.

*Filmmakers in attendance*

**English, 35mm, 112 min**

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## THE YELLOW HOUSE (LA MAISON JAUNE)

*d. Omar Hakkar, France/Algeria 2007 CF*

**25 Nouveau 16h00; 28 Suncoast 18h00**

*The Yellow House* is a sweet-natured film about a father's struggle to bring joy into his family's life once again. On learning that his policeman son has been killed, farmer Mouloud heads off to the city to collect the body. On his journey he receives much help and finally retrieves the body and takes it home. Following the burial, Mouloud has to deal with the grief of his wife Fatima and decides that something has to be done. Painting his house yellow fails to cheer her up sufficiently, but a video cassette could well hold the key.

**Arabic and Berber with English subtitles, 35mm, 83 min**

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## ZIMBABWE

*d. Darrell James Roodt, Zimbabwe/South Africa 2008 PF*

**25 Suncoast 18h00; 26 Ekhaya 18h00**

Especially relevant given recent events in this country, this film traces the hardships and exploitation a young Zimbabwean endures as she struggles to make a better life in South Africa. When her mother dies, Zimbabwe and her younger siblings move in with an unsympathetic aunt who lives close to the South African border. It becomes clear to Zimbabwe that she must independently support her family and she crosses the border, only to be faced with corruption and exploitation. Roodt, again working with a small budget, has made an important and deeply touching film.

*Filmmaker in attendance*

**English and Shona with English subtitles, Video, 84 min**

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# OUSMANE SEMBENE RETROSPECTIVE

In the realm of African filmmaking, Ousmane Sembene was a giant. Born in 1923 in Senegal, Sembene is frequently referred to as 'the father of African cinema', yet this title fails to really capture the full impact of his accomplishments as an African author, filmmaker, and intellectual. An acute and compassionate man, Sembene worked tirelessly toward distilling the structures and mechanisms of African society into powerful and memorable narrative and filmed images. His mastery of film language and the range of his subject matter embodied the evolving conflictual relationships between coloniser and the colonised, the state and the people, men and women, the rich and the poor, elders and youth. The passing of Sembene last year has left a notable vacuum in the African filmmaking community, yet despite this loss we can still have access, through his remarkable body of work, to the life, memory, insight and art of this great African giant.



**Mike Dearham**

*Curator: M-Net African Film Library*

## BLACK GIRL

*d. Ousmane Sembene, Senegal 1966 PF*

**25 Ekhaya 14h00**

Diouana arrives in southern France, invited by a French-based Senegalese couple to stay with them. In Dakar, before Senegalese independence, she worked for them as a nanny and expects to do the same work in Antibes. Prior to her emigration Diouana had heard wonderful stories about the colonial motherland and is ecstatic about her upcoming trip. But the reality that faces her is vastly different. Winner of the 1966 Jean Vigo Prize.

**French with English subtitles, Video, 59 min**

## BOROM SARET

*d. Ousmane Sembene, Senegal 1963 S*

**25 Ekhaya 14h00**

*Borom Saret* tells the story of a cart-taxi driver who goes to the city to make a living, but out of sympathy for other poverty-stricken people, works for free and goes hungry himself. The main characters are anti-heroes who are sacrificed for the broader needs of the 'people' – to rise against the system that is oppressing them.

**French and Wolof with English subtitles, Video, 20 min**



## CAMP DE THIAROYE

*d. Ousmane Sembene and Thiermo Faty Sow, Senegal 1988 PF*

**28 BAT 11h00**

Writer/directors Ousmane Sembene and Thiermo Faty Sow based *Camp de Thiaroye* on their personal experiences. During the French-Algerian war, a group of black soldiers fight on the side of France. But when hostilities cease, they are detained by their own government in the titular prison camp before being sent home. While incarcerated, they begin to wonder if their cause – their country's cause – is truly worth the sacrifice. Winner of the Special Grand Jury Prize at the Venice International Film Festival 1988.

**French and Wolof with English subtitles, Video, 150 min**

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## CEDDO

*d. Ousmane Sembene, Senegal 1977 PF*

**27 KCC 16h00**

The Ceddo try to preserve their traditional African culture against the onslaught of Islam, Christianity, and the slave trade. When King Demba War sides with the Muslims, the Ceddo kidnap his daughter, Princess Dior Yacine, to protest their forcible conversion to Islam. After trying to rescue the princess, various heirs to the throne are killed, and the King is murdered during the night. Eventually the kidnappers are killed and the princess is brought back to the village to confront the Imam. A powerful tale of the contradictions of religious forces and its effects on African culture and tradition.

**French and Wolof with English subtitles, Video, 120 min**

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## EMITAI

*d. Ousmane Sembene, Senegal 1974 PF*

**03 BAT 16h00**

When, during WWII, French troops come to a Diola village to conscript the men and confiscate the rice, the women hide the crop and the elders consult with the gods, but events slowly escalate into a horrific tragedy. Based on an actual incident and filmed on location in the village of Dimbering, *Emitai* explores the time and the socio-political impact of French oppression on the Senegalese people as a whole. When it was first released the French government ordered strict censorship of its content. Winner of the Golden Bear Prize at Moscow Film Festival 1971.

**Wolof and French with English subtitles, Video, 103 min**

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## FAAT KINE

*d. Ousmane Sembene, Senegal 2001 PF*

**29 BAT 16h00**

Dakar has shantytowns as well as high-rise buildings; streets are crowded with cattle and flashy cars, and women whose lives have been shaped by tribal custom and male prejudice as much as by their contemporary aspirations. Faat Kine is a single mother with two children, two ex-husbands, a pushy mother and an assortment of friends. She is the manager of a sparkling new gas station, but her success has been costly. Nevertheless, she values her control over her own life, and tries to balance modernity with tradition.

**French and Wolof with English subtitles, Video, 120 min**

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## GUELWAAR

*d. Ousmane Sembene, Senegal 1992 PF*

**30 Ekhaya 12h00**

The death of community leader and Catholic 'noble man' Guelwaar (Ndiaye) brings his family back to Senegal, but his funeral is delayed when his body goes missing. A mix-up has occurred, and it is soon discovered that the man has already been buried in a Muslim cemetery. The family sets out to reclaim the body, but the Muslim community refuse to have their burial grounds tampered with. As a local policeman is charged with finding a compromise before sectarian differences flare into violent conflict, we learn more about the dead man, a political firebrand opposed to foreign aid.

**French and Wolof with English subtitles, Video, 115 min**

## MANDAABI (THE MONEY ORDER)

*d. Ousmane Sembene, Senegal 1968 PF*

**29 Luthuli 14h00**

Sembene's classic second feature film unlocked for the first time the complex world of modern Africa. This is the story of a man who receives a money order and, in his attempts to cash it, encounters an intimidating barrage of Third World bureaucracy. Receiving the dubious windfall at first seems a blessing to Ibrahima Dieng, who lives with his two wives and their seven children. However, as the tale unfolds, the seemingly easy transaction threatens to destroy the traditional fabric of his life. *Mandaabi* is a witty, masterful portrait of an ancient civilisation in the throes of change.

**Wolof and French with English subtitles, Video, 90 min**

## MOOLADE

*d. Ousmane Sembene, Senegal 2004 PF*

**24 Suncoast 18h00**

The multi-award winning *Moolade* tackles the controversy of female circumcision in a passionate drama set in a rural village in Burkina Faso. When four little girls flee a "purification" ceremony – they take refuge with Collé (Fatoumata Coulibaly), a woman who refused to have her own daughter circumcised. She casts a mystical protection (the Moolaadé of the title) and a standoff follows. An impassioned and uplifting film which won the Prix Un Certain Regard at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival and the jury award at the 2005 Los Angeles Pan African Film Festival.

**Bambara and French with English subtitles, Video, 124 min**

## XALA

*d. Ousmane Sembene, Senegal 1975 PF*

**26 Nouveau 12h00**

It is the dawn of Senegal's independence from France, and as Dakar citizens celebrate in the streets we soon become aware that only faces have changed in the handover of power. White capital still controls the government. One official, Aboucader Beye, known by the title 'El Hadji', takes advantage of some of that money to marry his third wife, to the sorrow and chagrin of his first two wives and the resentment of his 'nationalist' and politically astute daughter. But he discovers on his wedding night that he has been struck with a "xala," a curse of impotence. Extremely funny.

**French and Wolof with English subtitles, Video, 123 min**

