

French Film Program Signs up 100th University

TOURNÉES FESTIVAL IS A HIT ON AMERICAN CAMPUSES

New York, February 7—For the first time ever, **more than 100 American universities** are taking part in the **Tournées Festival**, which brings contemporary **French films to campus screens**. In all, **108** universities are participating, from **41 States** and Puerto Rico. This year, the Tournées Festival will distribute approximately **\$180,000** in grants, with each participating institution receiving a grant of **\$1,800** to show a minimum of five films.

First launched by the **French-American Cultural Exchange (FACE)** and the **Cultural Services of the French Embassy in 1995**, the Tournées Festival was conceived to **help isolated universities** have access to new French films that are normally only distributed in big cities. Since its inception, the program has partnered with hundreds of universities and made it possible for more **than 250,000 students to discover French-language films**. It is hoped that participating universities will subsequently be able to launch their own self-sustaining French film festivals.

To promote French-American cooperation, a key mission of FACE and the French Cultural Services, **American professors are deeply involved** in the selection process, both for the universities and the films. Three distinguished Americans selected which universities to support: **Dudley Andrew**, Professor of Film and Comparative Literature at Yale University, **Livia Bloom**, Assistant Curator at the Museum of the Moving Image, and **Sonia Lee**, Professor of French and African Literature at Trinity College. And, every year, **Adrienne Halpern**, co-founder of Rialto Films, **Annette Insdorf**, Professor of Graduate Film Studies at Columbia University, **Richard Pena**, Film Curator at the Lincoln Center, and **Jean Vallier**, Film Critic, help select the films that are included in the program.

There are **23 new films** to choose from this year, in addition to the **60** of the preceding three years which remain available. All of France's **major contemporary directors** (Philippe Garrel, Alain Resnais, Patrice Chéreau, Claude Chabrol, Pascale Ferran, Francois Ozon...) are represented, as well as **promising newcomers** such as Géla Babluani, Emmanuel Carrère and Antony Cordier. Babluani's first movie, for instance, *13 Tzametj*, won several awards (Venice Film Festival 2005 Grand Jury Prize, Sundance Film Festival 2006 European Discovery of the Year, European Film Awards 2006...). Other selections celebrate the thriving film scene in **francophone countries**, with movies by Mahamat-Saleh Haroun, Abderrahmane Sissako, Ousmane Sembene and Daniel Kollo Sanou. A retrospective of Mahamat-Saleh Haroun's films was recently held at the MoMA, with the support of the French Embassy.

The Tournées Festival is one among several programs run by the Foreign Ministry to promote French film abroad. The Ministry holds a collection of approximately **300 fiction films** and **3,000 documentaries** (exploring a variety of topics, from politics to contemporary dance) which are available **free of charge** to universities and cultural centers. It has also put in place a **video-on-demand service** (<http://mae.universcine.com>), which offers movies for download to French cultural institutions and their local partners (museums, universities...) throughout the world.

The Tournées Festival is made possible with the generous support of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Centre National de la Cinématographie, the Grand Marnier Foundation, the Florence Gould Foundation, the Franco-American Cultural Fund (with SACEM, the Writers Guild of America, the Directors Guild of America and the Motion Picture Association), Highbrow Entertainment and Agnès B.

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