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Free French Film Festival Offered at SMC Through March 12

By Sophie Braccini



Photos provided

and actors as well as less known ones."

Lenart-Cheng teaches French at Saint Mary's College to a small but dedicated number of students who either major or minor in French. "Cultural programs such as this French Film Festival are highly important because they open our students' eyes to the world and they challenge them to examine views that they rarely encounter in U.S. mainstream media," she says.

The French American Cultural Exchange Foundation (FACE) offers the films to universities. Lenart-Cheng puts together a team of professors and students that choose five contemporary films and one classic film among those proposed by FACE.

The film "Deux Jours Une Nuit" ("Two Days, One Night") – directed by the Dardenne brothers and starring Marion Cotillard ("La Vie En Rose," "Rust and Bone") – will be shown at 7 p.m. tonight, Feb. 24, in SMC's Hagerty Lounge, De La Salle Hall. The Belgian brothers have been recognized many times at the Cannes Film Festival and are known for their intimate and pragmatic style, with movies often filmed with the camera in hand, close to the actors and the action, capturing every raw emotion. Their stories can be tough, but like with "Two Days, One Night," there is often the possibility of a miracle.

On March 3 at 7 p.m. another great French actress, Juliette Binoche, will be featured in "Clouds of Sils Maria," a story about the inescapable passage of time, directed by Olivier Assayas. Maria Anders (played by Binoche) is cast in the same play that started her career 20 years prior, only this time she is cast in the older role. Binoche is magnificent in this story about the clash of a young woman and a more mature one, which ends in the suicide of the older. This is a beautiful film that discusses the changes of time and cultures.

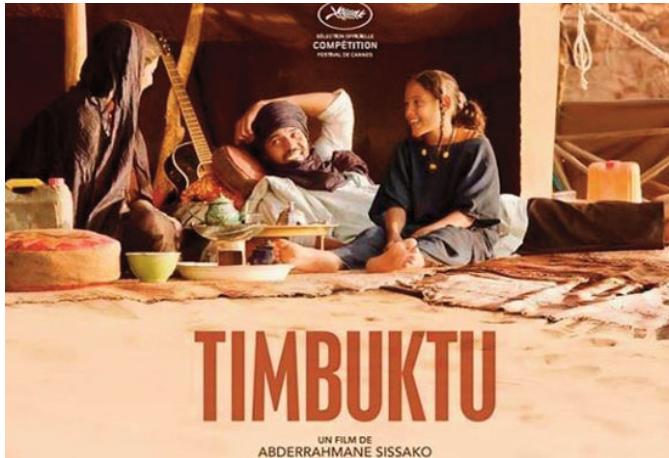
"Timbuktu" will be shown on March 9. The Oscar-nominated film is a must see. "Timbuktu, which will be introduced by our specialist on African history, professor Jennifer Lofkrantz, was an Academy Award nominee for Best Foreign Language Film," says Lenart-Cheng. "The film presents stunning imagery and timely questions about conflicts caused by Jihadists in the Malian city of Timbuktu." She adds that both that movie and the next, "The Nun," deal with the question of dogmatism and religious fanaticism.

Based on the 18th century novel by Diderot, "The Nun" tells the story of Suzanne, a 16-year-old girl whose family forces her into a convent against her will. Inside, she is confronted with brainwashing and unfair treatment, and tries to survive as she fights to regain her freedom. The movie is not

Some of the perks of having a college in your midst are the cultural activities offered: plays, concerts, conferences, exhibitions – and festivals. Now in its fourth year, the French film festival, which opened last week with the free showing of "Hiroshima Mon Amour" and "La Chambre Bleue," offers an affordable way to foster a cultural and intellectual understanding of other countries.

"We aim to present a representative selection of films, ranging from those likely to attract wider audiences to the more experimental ones," says Helga Lenart-Cheng, a professor in the department of modern languages who started the program. "To reflect the diversity of contemporary French cinema, we have selected a variety of genres (fiction, documentary, historical, animation, etc.) We want to showcase both emerging and established talents, so we choose famous directors

against religion or even against the idea of convents. It is about the battle of a young woman to be true to herself, armed with her passion alone to fight an entire institution and her own family. "For those who have seen the 1966 adaptation by Jacques Rivette it will be interesting to compare the two adaptations," adds Lenart-Cheng. "The Nun" will play at 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 12 in Hagerty Lounge, De La Salle Hall at Saint Mary's College.



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