

Subscribe to our Foreign Films Newsletter.  
Enter your email address:



## Foreign Films New to View

September 2009

Vol. 3, No. 9

The Foreign Films New to View newsletter is a monthly publication designed to keep you up to date on some of HCPL's latest foreign films on DVD. The selections in this newsletter are just a sample of the rich variety of films available to you through your library. Use the sign-up box above to have this newsletter sent directly to your e-mail every month, with new, recommended movies for you to view. See [Foreign Films Archive](#).

[12](#), directed by Nikita Mikhalkov

o:p>

(In Russian, with English subtitles)



Think of Sidney Lumet's *12 Angry Men*, but set in Russia, with a young Chechen on trial for murdering his Russian stepfather, and a jury ready to convict...except for one doubting holdout. His task is to convince his eleven fellow jurors to see that perhaps, just perhaps the young man is innocent. This is a tough assignment, since like their American counterparts, each juror bears some sort of personal baggage that influences his thoughts on the subject of guilt or innocence of a member of an ethnic minority.

[2 or 3 Things I Know About Her](#), directed by Jean-Luc Godard

(In French, with English subtitles)



Made at the same time as *Made in USA*, one being filmed in the morning, the other in the afternoon, this film explores, not surprisingly, Godard's fascination with language and image. Ostensibly about a young woman who resorts to prostitution to keep up a modest standard of living, it is also a film that centers on what Godard is thinking about st1:City w:st="on">Paris, commercial consumption, politics, and much more. While not one of Godard's best films, it possesses enough of his typical wit and striking images to keep a Godard devotee in good order.

[Bhram: An Illusion](#), directed by Pavan Kaul

(In Hindi, with English subtitles)



Antara is a beautiful, successful model, but she harbors a dark, tormented past. Whatever it is that haunts her, it keeps her distant from men, until she meets Shaan. He falls in love with Antara and urges her to meet his family. This event triggers an avalanche of distressing memories, when Antara meets Dev, Shaan's brother. Was Dev been responsible for the deep pain of Antara's haunting memories? Is he the villain she thinks he is? How will this affect her relationship with Shaan?

[Big Shot\\$](#), directed by Jacob Goldwasser

(In Hebrew, with English subtitles)



Four not terribly bright men set out to steal a large sum of money, but not from a bank or a store, rather from a police station. Loosely based on a true story and written by a police officer, the film is full of slapstick comic antics, as the four fools stumble their way towards their criminal goal.

[The Class](#), directed by Laurent Cantet

(In French, with English subtitles)



François Bégaudeau wrote an autobiographical novel called *Between the Walls*, about his experiences teaching immigrant middle school students in Paris. From that book, Cantet forged a film, with Bégaudeau cast as the teacher, François Marin. What the viewers see is a room full of pouting, disagreeable, uncertain, fidgety, bored teenagers, that universal breed of humans, recognizable anywhere, who need extra coaxing just to sit still. Bégaudeau's task is to mold these young people, the sons and daughters of working-class immigrants, into proper French citizens, but getting past the shyness, belligerence, hostility, uncertainty, and general contrariness is no small feat. Winner of the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 2008, [The Class](#) raises questions about what works best in a classroom: the formal pedagogical methods of teaching or the iconoclastic approaches, daring and risky as they are.

[Johan](#), directed by Nicole Van Kilsdonk

(In Dutch, with English subtitles)



Johan's father loves soccer, so much so that he begets eleven sons to form his own team. The only problem is that the youngest, Johan, doesn't really care for the game. In fact, he'd rather sing and play his guitar than lace up those soccer shoes...until the girl he loves starts falling for his soccer-playing brother. Now, Johan may need to rethink his likes and dislikes.

[Made in U.S.A.](#), directed by Jean-Luc Godard

(In French, with English subtitles)



Of the two films that Godard directed at the same time, [2 or 3 Things I Know about Her](#) being the one (see above), [Made in U.S.A.](#) is the stronger, both in its story and in its statement on the deconstruction of film itself. The surface narrative is about a woman who is investigating the disappearance of her boyfriend, with the story unfolding in Atlantic City, or the French version of it, or more accurately, Godard's vision of Atlantic City. But it is much more a vehicle for Godard to interject his views on America, American cinema, French cinema, and modern life, with his usual irony and wit.

[The Secrets](#), directed by Avi Neshet

(In Hebrew, with English subtitles)

From the director of [Turn Left at the End of the World](#), Avi Neshet in this film again explores female friendship. Naomi persuades her father to allow her to attend the religious community of Safed, where she plans to study the Torah (and delay her upcoming marriage). There she meets Michelle, the bad girl of the school, who despite their differences takes an eventual liking to the serious and religiously devoted Naomi. The two young women strive to help the older and



ailing Anouk, who herself has a troubled past steeped in darkness. Naomi and Michelle aim to help her find redemption from her past sins, but along the way they discover some secrets of their own about themselves.

[Woman on the Beach](#), directed by Hong Sang-soo



(In Korean, with English subtitles)

This film has been in the HCPL collection for several months, but it is worth another push to raise interest in viewers. Kim Joong-rae is a film director, who uses his profession to meet and bed attractive women. His flirtatious side gets him into trouble, however, when he falls for the girlfriend of a colleague, who has accompanied him to the beach where he hopes to polish off a screenplay. But that relationship doesn't entirely blossom the way Joong-rae might expect. In fact, it largely self-destructs due to his rash behavior. He meets another woman, equally attractive and close in resemblance to the first woman, and the little love triangle takes on a bit of comedic if melancholy flair.