YOUNG FRENCH CINEMA

Discover a New Generation of Directors

2019 FILM SELECTION

A program of UniFrance and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the U.S.
Foreword

French Cinema is widely known for the cinematic revolution it ignited with the New Wave more than five decades ago, but Contemporary and Young French directors are still vowing audiences and have continually been singled out for praise by the international press for their “sensuality and intellectual engagement”, for the work they bring to the screens “as radically frank in style as in substance”, for the “thrilling vibrancy” of a new generation “uniting personal and political to electrifying effect” with “a blend of style & intensity”.

The YOUNG FRENCH CINEMA program is one of the most convenient entry points for you to bring their works to your local audiences. For the fifth year in a row, it offers a selection of today’s best films and filmmakers. Most of the films selected in this program have premiered in 2018 in top international festivals. The program mainly focuses on rising talents, from high-profile independent works to quirky comedies, powerful documentaries about the world around us and exciting shorts. The current selection highlights two specificities of French cinema today, its focus on themes of gender diversity with half of the films directed by female filmmakers, and its curiosity with the world outside of France, from Morocco to Siberia, Mexico and Québec.

After four successful years and over 120 bookings in more than 30 cities throughout the US in 2018, the 2019 selection demonstrates that this young generation - more than ever - shares a global vision and an amazing capacity to combine cultural influences and tackle an incredibly wide range of subject matters.

In this brochure, you will find information about the guidelines of the program as well as descriptions of the films selected for the 2019 program. Please note that the 2019 film selection is available until December 31, 2019 under the conditions mentioned in this brochure.

YOUNG FRENCH CINEMA has been set up by UniFrance and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, as a way to bring French films with no US distribution to art house cinemas, film societies, the Alliance française network and American universities. The scope of the selection has widened since 2016 to include upcoming talents from Canada, in partnership with Telefilm Canada. We are also pleased to welcome our partner l’ACID for the third year in a row. This year we have included three films from their recent Cannes selection in our program.

We hope that these films will inspire you and we look forward to working with you!
# Young French Cinema

## Guidelines

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- **Pauline Enslaved (Pauline Asservie)** [20]
- **La Persistente (La Persistente)** [20]
- **The Villa (Les Gracieuses)** [20]

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Cover image: *Speak Up*

Image left: *Cassandro the Exotico!*
**Guidelines**

**YOUNG FRENCH CINEMA** is available to U.S. art house cinemas, film societies, the Alliance Française network and universities. Part of the selection is also available in Canada.

**FILM SELECTION:** The program includes 12 feature films (11 French, one Canadian) and 8 short films that are all available for viewing on Festival Scope (we provide a free account). All films can be booked “à la carte”: there is no minimum or maximum number of films that you must choose. In the event that you are showing more than four films from the program as a festival or series, that festival/series should be named YOUNG FRENCH CINEMA.

**COST:** Each feature film in the 2018 program is available for a $300 booking fee for up to two screenings per film. Each short film is available for a $40 booking fee for up to two screenings per short. Fees are paid to UniFrance who then reimburse directly the rights-holders.

If a venue takes the entire selection of Young French Cinema (features & shorts), the feature booking fee will be reduced to $250 per booking for up to 2 screenings, in order to act as an incentive.

Please note that outgoing shipping costs are to be paid by each organization.

**TIMELINE:** All inquiries must be sent at least six weeks before the screening date and addressed to adeline.monzier@unifrance.org. UniFrance will be the third party between you and the rights holder in France.

**FORMAT:** All films are available on DCP and on EclairPlay in DCP-quality and the latter is our preferred method of delivery. Some films are available in DVD or Blu-ray if necessary. Please check the formats available before booking a film.

**PUBLICITY:** All publicity materials must include the following credit line: This Young French Cinema program was made possible with the support of UniFrance and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy.

**TRAVEL GRANT:** Venues that would like to organize a master class with the director/actor of one of the films shown can apply for a travel grant to fly the artist to the U.S. Please send us an email with your request and be as detailed as possible about your proposed master class, the venue, the number of students expected, the moderators of the discussion and explain why it’s important for the screening to have the artist attend. UniFrance will consider your application and if positive, facilitate the contact with the artist.
CANADA: Eight features and 8 shorts are available for booking by Canadian art house cinemas, film societies, the Alliance Française network and universities under the conditions listed above.

CONTACT: For all requests and for access to screeners, please contact: adeline.monzier@unifrance.org
“There’s something new afoot in French cinema these days.”
—THE NEW YORKER

“More than 50 years on, French cinema is still part of the country’s exception culturelle.”
—THE GUARDIAN

“French cinema: a blend of style and intensity”
—THE NEW YORK TIMES
Following his prize-winning debut feature Neither Heaven nor Earth, acclaimed visual artist and filmmaker Clément Cogitore travels deep into the taiga of Eastern Siberia to document the feud between two families living on opposite banks of a river hundreds of miles from civilization. Braguino focuses on the members of the Braguine family, who first settled this stunningly beautiful remote region, while those of the Kitine family across the river appear only as figures in the distance, lending the film an enigmatic, eerie quality that transcends its subject matter. Indeed, Braguino is far more than a record of the trouble between neighbors, but a deeply lyrical elegy to an imperiled way of life celebrated here through long, majestic shots of men, women, and children at work and at play on the misty river and in the autumnal woods. While the outside world encroaches upon this land out of time in the specific form of heavily armed men who helicopter in from the city to hunt for sport, Cogitore’s poetic idiom suggests the environmental threat at issue extends far beyond this isolated situation. Braguino is presented with Cogitore’s short film Les Indes galantes.

Clément Cogitore's film The Amorous Indies (Les Indes Galantes) is also available in the short film selection this year.
One-woman film crew Marie Losier returns with her Bolex and her inimitably imaginative style to present this tremendously moving portrait of Sául Armendáriz, better known as Cassandro, the openly gay Mexican wrestling champion who has been legendary in rings around the world since the early 90s. Yet the viewer soon discovers that the battles in Cassandro’s life have extended far beyond the ring, notably to his struggle with substance abuse. But while Cassandro, the Exotico! is primarily a tribute to an unstoppable original who has stared down all of life’s challenges, it is also an affecting picture of the friendship between the filmmaker and her subject, a bond most clearly evidenced in the vulnerability Cassandro displays in confiding on camera. Losier rewards that trust with her marvelous depictions of Cassandro’s inner world, artfully created scenes that take Cassandro out of the everyday and into a dreamlike, mystical landscape that defies interpretation but speaks directly to the senses. This blend of emotional truth and flight of fancy is what makes Marie Losier a unique and essential bridge between the avant-garde and documentary film.
Shortly after their chance meeting, Gaspard asks Laura if she will accompany him to his family home and pose as his girlfriend at his father’s second wedding. At this point, viewers will probably assume they’re dealing with a familiar and delightful trope of romantic comedy: the fake couple will become a real one, and everyone will live happily ever after. And while that isn’t altogether false, Antony Cordier’s Gaspard at the Wedding is a far more surprising entertainment than one might expect, both sophisticated and eccentric. For one thing, the family home in question is a working zoo, complete with tigers, monkeys, and two-headed caribous, and the family doesn’t always know how to draw the line between animal instinct and human behavior. A case in point is Coline, Gaspard’s sister, a beautiful young woman who walks around wearing a bear skin because she believes she is part bear. She is also in love with her brother. Cordier manages not only to make these wacky situations believable, but to give them real emotional depth, delivering an unexpectedly poignant romance.
With this poignant contribution to the classic coming-of-age genre, French-Canadian director Philippe Lesage perfectly captures the tightrope walk of teenagers discovering love and navigating the rapids between hope and disappointment, exhilaration and shame. The film initially follows two storylines, focused on siblings Guillaume and Charlotte as they explore their romantic and sexual needs: Guillaume finds himself falling in love with his best friend Nicolas, while Charlotte breaks up with her clueless boyfriend and falls in with an older, dangerously appealing guy. While Guillaume’s subsequent ostracism and Charlotte’s abuse at the hands of an unscrupulous man are described with a richness of specific details, their pain is universally relatable. Then with a surprise third act, Lesage moves back in time to tell the story of a summer camp flirtation between young Felix and Beatrice, creating a wistful picture of the innocence preceding Guillaume and Charlotte’s disenchantment. While Genesis’s greatest strength lies in its vulnerable lead performances and emotional honesty, Lesage is also a top-rate stylist whose saturated colors evoke the warm palette of home movies, adding a layer of exquisitely painful nostalgia to this bittersweet teenage symphony.
When violinist Simon Daoud is hired to teach the violin to a class of unruly junior high school students in an immigrant suburb of Paris, his first instinct is to run back to his rarefied world of classical string quartets. His mission to teach these twelve loudmouths to perform the violin parts in Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade at the Paris Philharmonic at the end of the school year seems beyond impossible. Yet as he gets to know the kids and their families, Simon's priorities shift and he determines to do everything in his power to get them to the Philharmonic. While the movie clock is kept ticking by this exciting objective, the film's heartwarming core is in its portrayal of the diverse group of kids brought together in the orchestra class. Writer-director Rachid Hami combines a documentary sensibility with a knack for bringing out his young actors' comedic flair and dramatic intensity. In this regard, Orchestra Class's major discovery is Alfred Renely, the fifteen-year-old actor who shines as Arnold, a quiet boy who discovers he is a natural by taking his violin up to the roof of his housing project every night to practice.
Return to Bollène
(RETOUR À BOLLÈNE)

Said Hamich’s taut semi-autobiographical drama avoids all the clichés of the “banlieue-film,” that highly uneven subgenre of films set in French housing projects, generally populated by people of North African descent and too often devoted to the spectacle of cops chasing dealers, to provide an insightful, at times painful look at the challenges and contradictions experienced by the children of North African immigrants to France. Return to Bollène features the carefully nuanced, resonant story of Nassim, a French-Moroccan businessman based in Abu Dabi who returns to the South of France and his hometown of Bollène to attend his sister’s engagement ceremony and introduce his American fiancée to his family. Through a series of encounters with family members and old acquaintances, a subtle picture emerges of a brilliant young man in flight from his traditional family and the dead-end town where he was raised. While it is powerfully astute and balanced in its assessment of the situation in France—notably on the rise of the extreme right—Return to Bollène achieves a universal quality in its depiction of alienation born of exclusion and shame.
When twenty-year-old Sofia buckles over in pain during a family gathering, her cousin Lena whisks her off to a hospital, telling her traditional family she is taking her to the pharmacy to seek relief from a stomach ache. In fact, Sofia has gone into labor without knowing she was pregnant. From here, writer-director Meryem Benm'Barek embarks the viewer on a nightmarish journey that is all-too-real in the repressive context of Morocco, where pre-marital sex is a criminal offense: Lena must implore a doctor to allow her unmarried cousin to deliver at his facility, where Sofia is dismissed immediately after the birth and enjoined to come back with the father or face prosecution. Holding her newborn daughter, Sofia leads her cousin to one of Casablanca's slums, in search of the father she barely knows. The ensuing familial and legal crisis provides a damning portrait of a society where antiquated values vie with a pervasive cynicism. Yet Benm'Barek’s confidence as a storyteller, particularly in delivering a stunning third-act twist, lifts Sofia above the level of social protest to reveal a profoundly complex, endlessly fascinating reality.
Something is Happening begins like an uplifting, charmingly quirky road movie: having lost her husband and job, Irma jumps into a river in Avignon, only to be rescued by Dolores, a free-spirited Spaniard roaming the south of France to research a gay-friendly travel guide. Irma and Dolores strike up a friendship and head off in Dolores's convertible. While most filmmakers would be satisfied to stick with the ensuing subtle character study of women in middle age, served by vulnerable performances by actresses Bojena Horackova and Lola Dueñas, Anne Alix’s project is both more original and more profound. As they wander glorious backroad landscapes, Irma and Dolores serve as our fictional guides into a little-seen France of factory workers, hunters, and fishermen, all of whom are played by non-actors participating in the film in their own roles. Gradually, the fictional canvas loosens, the focus shifts to the population of the sun-drenched hinterland, and it is revealed that the “something happening” is the massive influx of migrants on Mediterranean shores. The film takes on a haunting urgency as it develops into one of the most exhilarating examples of the growing genre of documentary-fiction hybrids.
Steve Landry is a journeyman boxer whose greatest quality is his persistence: in a career of 49 bouts, he has lost 33, yet he keeps climbing into the ring. But as opportunities to fight grow slimmer and the bills pile up, middle-aged Steve takes a well-paid job as a sparring partner for a young European boxing champion training for his comeback match. While Steve’s wife is horrified that he has agreed to serve as a punching bag for one of the fiercest boxers in the game, Steve sticks to his guns, driven by the dream of buying his daughter the piano she wants and maybe, just maybe getting to fight his 50th and last boxing match. Samuel Jouy’s first feature is a bracing, original take on the mythology of boxing on film, focused not so much on the win-lose drama in the ring but the psychological and emotional lives of those around it, from the boxer who never wins to the wife and children who love him regardless. Mathieu Kassovitz’s transformative performance as a resilient everyman gives this beautifully understated tribute to the underdog a universal reach.
Weaving together interviews with 24 black women living in France, film-maker, activist, and self-described Afro-feminist Amandine Gay provides an essential look at the challenges facing women of African descent living in what remains a systematically unequal society. The film is divided into short, pithily-titled chapters in which these eloquent citizens, artists, researchers, engineers, and bloggers “speak out” about issues including racist stereotypes, sectarianism, fetishization of black women, discrimination in the school system, religious freedom, and challenges facing LGBTQ members of Afro-descendant communities. Speak Out is particularly remarkable for its deft combination of anecdotal material—viewers will not soon recover from the heartbreaking opening sequence in which a succession of women describe their first childhood encounters with racism—and thought-provoking, sometimes surprising systemic critique. While certain issues such as the debate around the right to wear hijabs and the recent removal of the word “race” from the French constitution are specific to the French context, Speak Out powerfully articulates certain experiences shared by Afro-Americans. More unexpectedly, it reveals that successful aspects of American diversity serve as beacons of hope elsewhere in the world.
With this sensitive debut feature, Michaël Dacheux puts a fresh spin on the stylistic and thematic tropes of the French New Wave and its immediate descendants, filming the lives and loves of young people on the streets of Paris much like his predecessors did, but updating his approach to include queer desire. The story begins when 25-year-old Martin arrives from the provinces to try to reunite with his first love Léa in Paris. Léa tells him she is not prepared to get back together and the two go their separate ways, facing the difficulties of realizing their dreams in the big city. In following this classic Balzac theme of provincials in the capital, Dracheux takes an affectionate, delicate view of their respective trajectories, showing Léa blossom as an artist and Martin falling in love with a man. While the film acknowledges filmmaker Jean Eustache as its patron saint with a visit to his Paris street and the warm, witty presence of his actress Françoise Lebrun playing herself, the influence of the great Eric Rohmer is felt in the narrative’s four-season structure and its off-the-beaten-path view of contemporary Paris.
In this hilarious, whip-smart comedy, first-time director Judith Davis examines the frustrations of a generation that came of age after the fall of the Berlin Wall, hearing that the world was better before, yet that there are no more alternatives. Davis stars as Angèle, a young urban planner in Paris who loses her job and moves back in with her diehard communist father. Angèle is an idealist: she refuses to give up the dream of revolution that her parents nearly realized in the protests of May 1968. But her activism comes at a high cost to her personal relationships: she has never forgiven her mother for giving up her political struggle, criticizes her sister for her bourgeois lifestyle, and has difficulty accepting her feelings for her suitor Simon, fearing they might be a distraction from the work of changing the world. In presenting contemporary France through the eyes of this angry young woman, Davis deftly satirizes the culture of capitalism and bureaucracy. While the resulting picture of a society short on hope and rich in disappointment is chilling, Angèle’s uproarious, heartwarming trajectory suggests there are possibilities to be found in less dogmatic approaches.
**The Amorous Indies** *(LES INDES GALANTES)*

**DIRECTOR** Clément Cogitore  
**SCREENPLAY** Clément Cogitore  
**DETAILS** 2017, France, 5’26 min, Experimental

Krumpling is a dance born in the Los Angeles ghettos after the riots of 1995. Through this performance filmed on the Opéra Bastille stage, Clément Cogitore creates a battle between urban culture and Rameau’s music.

**Apocalypse After** *(ULTRA PULPE)*

**DIRECTOR** Bertrand Mandico  
**SCREENPLAY** Bertrand Mandico  
**CAST** Vimala Pons, Elina Löwensohn, Lola Creton  
**DETAILS** 2018, France, 38 min, Fantasy

An abandoned seaside resort. The shooting for a fantasy film about the end of an era wraps up. Two women, both members of the film crew, one an actrice, the other a director, are on the verge of concluding their love affair.

**Blue Dog** *(CHIEN BLEU)*

**DIRECTOR** Fanny Liatard, Jérémy Trouilh  
**SCREENPLAY** Fanny Liatard, Jérémy Trouilh  
**CAST** Michel Pichon, Rod Paradot, Mariam Baradji  
**DETAILS** 2018, France, 17 min, Fiction

Emile fears the outside world. He stays at home and paints everything in blue. One evening, his son Yoan meets Soraya, a young girl, fond of Tamil dance. She will help him find the right colour.

**The Fall** *(LA CHUTE)*

**DIRECTOR** Boris Labbé  
**SCREENPLAY** Boris Labbé  
**CAST** Armelle Mercat, Hugo Bravo, Capucine Latrasse  
**DETAILS** 2018, France, 14:22, Animation/Fiction

As celestial beings descend to Earth vitiating its population, the world’s order unbalances. Initiated by these terms, a tragic fall leads to the parturition of crucial opposites: Hell and Heaven’s circles.
Kapitalistis (KAPITALISTIS)
DIRECTOR Pablo Muñoz Gomez
SCREENPLAY Pablo Muñoz Gomez, Sarah Schenkel, Xavier Seron
CAST Georges Siatidis, Nikolaos Sachas, Wim Willaert
DETAILS 2017, France, Belgium, 14 min, Comedy

“Santa is capitalist. He brings toys to the rich kids and sweat shirts to the poor ones.”
–Nikos, 5 years old

Pauline Enslaved (PAULINE ASSERVIE)
DIRECTOR Charline Bourgeois-Tacquet
SCREENPLAY Charline Bourgeois-Tacquet
CAST Sigrid Bouaziz, Anaïs Demoustier
DETAILS 2018, France, 24 min, Comedy

Pauline has no news from Bruce, the married man whom she has an affair with. During her break in the countryside with her friend Violette, she will spend the whole stay waiting for a text message. Experimenting thousand stages of obsessive love.

La Persistente (LA PERSISTENTE)
DIRECTOR Camille Lugan
SCREENPLAY Camille Lugan
CAST Harold Torres, Angelina Woreth, Julien Drion
DETAILS 2018, France, 22 min, Fiction

A ski resort, somewhere in the French Pyrenees. Ivan only lives for his motorcycle—the sentient, loving, breathing La Persistente. When a local rival tears her away from him, Ivan’s obsession becomes to win her back.

The Villa (LES GRÂCIEUSES)
DIRECTOR Emmanuel Poulain-Arnaud
SCREENPLAY Emmanuel Poulain-Arnaud
CAST Joséphine Draï, Adrianna Gradziel
DETAILS 2017, France, 18 min, Fiction

A real estate agent, a single mom on the verge of a breakdown, is showing her best villa to a Russian client who works for billionaires. Both must absolutely conclude a deal, even if they don’t speak the same language and find a real corpse in the closet.
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