

Film Streams Repertory Series: GREAT DIRECTORS: CASSAVETES

14-film retrospective celebrating the “father of American independent film” to include special appearance by friend, collaborator and American indie veteran actor Seymour Cassel

Omaha, Nebraska (Tuesday, January 27, 2009)—Today he’s known as the “father of American independent film,” but even that underrates John Cassavetes (1929-1989). For decades now, filmmakers have grasped at the authenticity that came so natural to Cassavetes’ work by following his DIY approach—hand-held cameras, available lighting, friends and family as cast (often and most notably his wife Gena Rowlands), and above all, financing by second-mortgage and sky-high credit. The blessedly mixed results—alternately amateurish and transcendent—all point back to an influence so fresh and ahead of his time that we still haven’t caught up to him.

Beginning Friday, February 6, Cassavetes will be the subject of a 7-week retrospective at Film Streams’ Ruth Sokolof Theater (14th and Webster, Omaha). In all, the **Great Directors: Cassavetes** series will feature eleven films directed by Cassavetes, two more in which he performs, and two special events to bookend the series.

Born in New York City in 1929, Cassavetes made his filmmaking debut at age 30 with SHADOWS, a landmark of independent cinema about a biracial romance in New York during the Beat generation.

“We had no intention of offering it for commercial distribution,” Cassavetes told biographer Ray Carney years later. “It was an experiment all the way, and our main objective was just to learn. Not one actor was paid for his services, nor were the technicians given anything. What kept us going was enthusiasm. We were working for the fun of doing something we wanted to do. It is more important to work creatively than to make money. We would never have been able to finish if all the people who participated in the film hadn’t discovered one absolutely fundamental thing: that being an artist is nothing other than the desire, the insane wish to express yourself completely, absolutely.”

That ethos would permeate Cassavetes’ entire directorial career, which would span 12 films in thirty years before his death in 1989. To fund several of those projects, Cassavetes took on various acting jobs, including roles in such films as THE DIRTY DOZEN (1967), Roman Polanski’s ROSEMARY’S BABY (1968), and Elaine May’s MIKEY AND NICKY (1976), the latter two of which will play within the Film Streams retrospective.

Film Streams Repertory Series: GREAT DIRECTORS: CASSAVETES (continued)

All 14 films within the Great Directors: Cassavetes series will play for one week at Film Streams' Ruth Sokolof Theater, with showtimes beginning in the late afternoon Monday-Wednesday, early afternoon on Thursdays, and all day Saturday-Sunday. Tickets to all shows are \$8 general, \$6 for seniors, students and teachers, and \$4 for Film Streams Members, with the exception of two special events:

- On Friday, February 13, Film Streams will welcome Cassavetes' longtime friend and collaborator and American independent cinema veteran actor **Seymour Cassel** for a special event at the Ruth Sokolof Theater. The evening will begin with a screening of Cassavetes' MINNIE AND MOSKOWITZ (starring Cassel opposite Gena Rowlands), followed by a Q&A and cocktail reception with Cassel. *Tickets for the event are \$25 for Film Streams Members and \$30 for non-members.*
- On Thursday, March 19, Film Streams and the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts will present **Arthouse: Bemis Artists Talk Cassavetes**, part of an ongoing conversation series at the Ruth Sokolof Theater featuring the perspectives of current Bemis Center artists-in-residence. *Tickets for the Arthouse event are \$8 general, \$6 for seniors, students and teachers, \$4 for Film Streams and Bemis Center Members, and free to anyone who presents ticket stubs from two or more films in the Great Directors: Cassavetes series.*

More information on all films in the Great Directors: Cassavetes series can be found on the following page. For questions, please contact Casey Logan by phone at (402) 933-0259 x 11 or email at casey@filmstreams.org.

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Film Streams Repertory Series

Great Directors: Cassavetes

February 6 – March 26, 2009

February 6 – 12

Shadows 1959

Directed by John Cassavetes.

With this innovative directorial debut, about a biracial New York romance during the Beat Generation and featuring music by Charles Mingus,

Cassavetes effectively launched American independent cinema. USA; 81 min.

February 6 – 12

Faces 1968

Directed by John Cassavetes.

Nominated for three Oscars (including a Best Supporting Actor nod for Seymour Cassel), FACES is an exhaustively honest and powerfully intimate portrait of a marriage in ruin.

USA; 130 min.

Friday, February 13, 7pm

An Evening with Seymour Cassel

From his numerous collaborations with John Cassavetes to his Sundance Award-winning performance in the 1992 indie comedy IN THE SOUP to more recent turns in the films of Wes Anderson (RUSHMORE, THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS, THE LIFE AQUATIC WITH STEVE ZISSOU), veteran actor Seymour Cassel has carved out one of the most admirable and understatedly brilliant careers in contemporary cinema. Join us Friday, February 13 as we welcome Seymour to the Ruth Sokolof Theater for a special screening of MINNIE & MOSKOWITZ, followed by a post-show Q&A and cocktail reception in our lobby.

Film Streams Repertory Series: GREAT DIRECTORS: CASSAVETES (continued)

February 13 – 19

Minnie and Moskowitz 1971

Directed by John Cassavetes.

Seymour Cassel plays an aging hippie parking-lot attendant opposite Gena Rowland's straight-laced and scorned museum curator in this opposites-attract romantic comedy. USA; 114 min.

February 13 – 19

Rushmore 1998

Directed by Wes Anderson.

In a quietly assured performance, Seymour Cassel plays benevolent barber to forlorn industrialist Herman Blume (Bill Murray) and understanding father to troubled teen Max Fischer (Jason Schwartzman). USA; 93 min.

February 20 - 26

Gloria 1980

Directed by John Cassavetes.

Perhaps Cassavetes' most commercial film, GLORIA earned Gena Rowlands an Oscar nomination for her portrayal of a former Mafia mistress who comes to protect a young boy on the run from the Mob. USA; 123 min.

February 20 – 26

Too Late Blues 1961

Directed by John Cassavetes.

Following the acclaim of SHADOWS came Cassavetes' major studio debut, a similarly gritty but more plot-oriented drama starring Bobby Darin as a jazz musician whose ambitions cause him to sell out. USA; 103 min.

February 27 – March 5

Husbands 1970

Directed by John Cassavetes.

Peter Falk, Ben Gazzara, and Cassavetes himself play a trio of middle-aged men who endure a simultaneous midlife crisis (along with a weekend of hard-drinking fun) after the funeral of a close friend. USA; 131 min.

February 27 – March 5

A Woman Under the Influence 1974

Directed by John Cassavetes.

Gena Rowlands (as a loving but troubled matriarch) and Peter Falk (as her loving but confused husband) bring amazingly powerful performances to what many contend is Cassavetes' greatest achievement. USA; 155 min.

March 6 – March 12

Opening Night 1977

Directed by John Cassavetes.

As the opening night of her new show approaches, a stage actress (Rowlands, in one of hers and Cassavetes' most collaborative efforts) suffers a breakdown following the death of an adoring fan. USA; 144 min.

March 6 – March 12

The Killing of a Chinese Bookie 1976

Directed by John Cassavetes.

Cassavetes takes a noir turn with this tale of strip club owner (Ben Gazzara) pressured to kill a gangster in order to clear his gambling debts. USA; 109 min.

March 13 – March 19

Love Streams 1984

Directed by John Cassavetes.

The film that co-inspired our nonprofit's name (!), LOVE STREAMS features Cassavetes and Rowlands as middle-aged siblings who lean on one another during hard times. USA; 141 min.

Film Streams Repertory Series: GREAT DIRECTORS: CASSAVETES (continued)

March 13 – March 19

Big Trouble 1986

Directed by John Cassavetes.

Alan Arkin gets caught in the trap of a duplicitous couple (Peter Falk and Beverly D'Angelo) in BIG TROUBLE, what would be Cassavetes' last film. USA; 93 min.

Thursday, March 19, 7pm

Arthouse: Bemis Artists Talk Cassavetes

Join us for this series-wrapping discussion about the films and influence of John Cassavetes, moderated by Bemis Center curator Hesse McGraw. Free admission to anyone who presents ticket stubs from two or more films in the Cassavetes series.

March 20 – March 26

Rosemary's Baby 1968

Directed by Roman Polanski.

Cassavetes stars opposite Mia Farrow as a husband whose deal with the devil brings doom to the womb in this stylish horror film. USA; 136 min.

March 20 – 26

Mikey and Nicky 1976

Directed by Elaine May.

Cassavetes and close friend Peter Falk co-star in this overlooked and underappreciated thriller/drama/tragedy about a small-time gangster in trouble with the Mob and the lifelong buddy called in to bail him out. USA; 119 min.

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Film Streams is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the cultural environment of the Omaha-Council Bluffs area through the presentation and discussion of film as an art form. In July 2007, we opened the Ruth Sokolof Theater, our two-screen cinema located within the Saddle Creek Records development north of downtown Omaha. For more information, visit us online at www.filmstreams.org.

