



KLUTE



TO BE OR NOT TO BE



THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES



STRANGER ON THE THIRD FLOOR



MR HULOT'S HOLIDAY



PAISA



FUNNY FACE

METROPOLIS

Thursday 26 February 8.00pm and 9.40pm

CAUGHT 1949 Max Ophuls 88 minutes
Ophuls' acerbic noir melodrama tells the story of a cruel, Cinderella-like marriage between a naive young woman (Barbara Bel Geddes) who dreams of bettering herself, and a sadistic millionaire who marries her for the pleasure of destroying her. Robert Ryan's frightening portrayal of Smith Ohlrig, by turns both infantile and sadistic, was not-so-loosely based on Howard Hughes, revenge for director Ophuls' previous poor treatment at Hughes' hands. At times Ophuls seems barely able to rein in the dramatic and emotional excesses of the plot but with his superb, controlled visual style (the great Lee Garmes was cinematographer) and sure-footed handling of the complex narrative themes, he succeeds in producing one of Hollywood's most compelling films.

THE WOMAN ON THE BEACH 1947 Jean Renoir 70 minutes
Renoir's genuinely strange and haunting film was the final stanza of his Hollywood interlude. Unable to come to terms with the abstraction and eroticism implicit in Renoir's vision, RKO cut the film extensively, resulting in an at times fragmentary but consistently fascinating and resonant exploration of the world of dreams. The unique, oneiric atmosphere finds its thematic counterpoint in the psychological and physical limitations of the characters; a blind painter, his passionate wife and a shell-shocked sailor.

Thursday 25 March 8.00pm

THE WONDER RING 1955 Stan Brakhage 6 minutes
This early film by the legendary Brakhage is a record of the overhead railway in New York, the 'Third Avenue El', before it was torn down.

KLUTE 1971 Alan Pakula 113 minutes
John Klute (Donald Sutherland) is a small town private eye looking for a missing man, who becomes obsessed with the protection of prostitute, Bree Daniels (Jane Fonda, in an Oscar-winning performance). Beautifully filmed by Gordon Willis, plot is secondary in this tensely-paced, psychological thriller that explores themes of dependence and destruction as Daniels struggles between emotional independence and commitment while subject to the increasingly obsessive attentions of Klute. Also starring Roy Scheider in a perfectly-pitched performance.

Thursday 29 April 8.00pm

BIG BUSINESS 1929 James W Horne 20 minutes
Perhaps the two funniest reels of film ever made, Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy are Christmas tree salesmen in July whose desperate attempts to make a sale result in ever-increasing mayhem. Hilarious and unmissable.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE 1942 Ernst Lubitsch 99 minutes
Based on a story idea by Melchior Lengyel (*Ninotchka*, *Days of Glory*), this is considered one of Paramount's finest comedies. Set in Nazi-occupied Warsaw, the film revolves around the resistance of a Polish Theatrical troupe, including a husband and wife team played hilariously by Jack Benny and Carole Lombard. Condemned for its perceived bad taste at the time of its release, this criticism was to miss the power of the film's mockery of Nazism and its pompous pretensions. The film was released after Lombard's tragic death.

Thursday 27 May 8.00pm

1941 1941 Francis Lee 4 minutes
An abstract representation of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour by pioneering avant-garde animator Francis Lee.

SOME CAME RUNNING 1959 Vincente Minnelli 136 minutes
An engrossing 1950s melodrama, *Some Came Running* follows the return of Dave Hirsh (Frank Sinatra), an unsuccessful novelist and war veteran with a taste for drinking and gambling, to his Midwest hometown. Hirsh is accompanied by Ginny (Shirley MacLaine), a flamboyant floozy who causes a stir in the small town. Dean Martin is an affable presence as Hirsch's professional gambling buddy, Bama Dillert. Minnelli's film features extraordinary direction of its star cast and its success hinges on the slow-burning intensity he is able to generate between the characters. Elmer Bernstein provides a moody score. (Paul Javal, the hero of Godard's *Contempt*, claims he wears his hat in the bathtub in homage to Dean Martin's Dillert.)

Thursday 24 June 8.00pm

MUSICAL POSTER NUMBER 1 1940 Len Lye 2 minutes
Len Lye's beautiful, hand-painted propaganda film warns the wartime public against the dangers of too much talk.

THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES 1946 William Wyler 170 minutes
This epic tale of ex-servicemen returning to life in their small town after the war remains one of Hollywood's most perfectly realised examples of film-making as a collaborative art. William Wyler's polished direction, Robert Sherwood's sensitive but uncompromising script and Gregg Toland's superb, deep focus photography combine brilliantly with a suite of wonderful performances from, amongst others, Frederic March, Myrna Loy, Dana Andrews, Teresa Wright and Harold Russell. An immensely important film for many reasons, not least because, in its willingness to tackle 'difficult' subjects, it demonstrated an emerging maturity in mainstream Hollywood.

Thursday 26 August 8.00pm and 9.30pm

ANGEL CITY 1976 Jon Jost 70 minutes
Frank Goya (Robert Glaudini) is a Los Angeles private eye hired to investigate the death of a Hollywood starlet, but Goya's philosophy on crime solving means he's not searching for a murderer, but for a visual truth. Part private eye satire, part hilarious take on Hollywood, part meditation on life in a huge city, the film is a fun but formally challenging spin on Los Angeles. Laden with discordant narrative devices and bizarre improvised dialogue, the film revels in the audience expectations of an old style private dick movie. Reputedly the film cost Jost just \$6000 to make, and his characteristic creative use of low budgets is seen to great effect.

STRANGER ON THE THIRD FLOOR 1940 Boris Ingster 64 minutes
A reporter (John McGuire), whose evidence at trial may have sent the wrong man to the electric chair, now finds himself implicated in murder. Often cited as the first film noir, the once-forgotten *Stranger on the Third Floor* combines German expressionism with a breathless B movie plot line to produce a startling, claustrophobic film nightmare. Noir specialist Nicholas Musuraca's wonderful chiarascuro lighting and Ingster's sure command of the psychological complexities of the plot reach their apogee in the celebrated dream sequence. Features great performances from Elisha Cook Jr and Peter Lorre.

Metropolis Film Society screens at the Erwin Rado Theatre, 211 Johnson Street, Fitzroy. Admission is by annual membership (\$45 and \$40 concession) or by mini pass (\$14 and \$12 for entry to two consecutive screenings).

Thursday 30 September 8.00pm

HOLD ME WHILE I'M NAKED 1966 George Kuchar 15 minutes
Kuchar's legendary reconstruction and demolition of the 1950s melodrama almost defies description. Part self-reflexive satire, part mournful reminiscence, the lurid colours, extravagant music and over-the-top performances combine in a film that celebrates the language of Hollywood while at the same time emptying it of all meaning.

BIGGER THAN LIFE 1956 Nicholas Ray 95 minutes
A quiet suburban teacher (James Mason, in his greatest performance) takes the 'miracle drug' cortisone to treat a possibly fatal disease and is gradually transformed into a sadistic megalomaniac, subjecting his terrified family to increasingly violent rages. Ray's astonishing assault on bourgeois complacency reveals the madness and cruelty at the heart of 1950s conventions. His mise en scène serves to underline the film's themes and preoccupations, the vivid colours and startling use of light and shadow enhancing the domestic nightmare. 'God was wrong!' Mason bellows when it is suggested that God allowed Abraham to spare Isaac's life. One of Hollywood's most subversive films made by a great artist at his peak.

Thursday 28 October 8.00pm

A PROPOS DE NICE 1930 Jean Vigo 22 minutes
Jean Vigo's first of only 4 films before his tragic death aged 29 is a dazzling visual satire of the Cote d'Azur playground of middle class tourists, subtly contrasted with the lives of Nice's poor. Shot by Dziga Vertov's brother Boris Kaufman, its brilliant use of montage and dissolves leaves the viewer with a series of unforgettable images, including the croupier raking up passengers just arrived by train and a woman sunning herself on the beach until she becomes a skeleton.

MR HULOT'S HOLIDAY 1952 Jaques Tati 86 minutes
The first and greatest incarnation of Jacques Tati's gentle, bumbling hero has Mr Hulot, with pipe, hat, overcoat and too-short trousers, unwittingly wreak havoc at a quiet Breton seaside resort. A delightful combination of clever slapstick and wry observation of the French bourgeoisie at play, *Mr Hulot's Holiday* is Tati's most perfectly realised film. It utilises little dialogue; instead the humour derives from the body language of the characters and its perfectly structured soundtrack. Winner of the Palme D'Or at Cannes.

Annual membership includes entry of one free guest to one screening. New members can join prior to any screening. Visit metropoliscinema.com or telephone Jeremy on 8300 0749 or Emily on 9489 5464 for further information.

Thursday 25 November 8.00pm

WORDS FOR BATTLE 1942 Humphrey Jennings 8 minutes
Jennings' 'film poem' sees him at his most experimental, taking the documentary form into almost abstract realms as he refracts writing from the likes of Blake and Milton and the music of Handel through the prism of contemporary wartime Britain.

THE TOWN 1943 Josef von Sternberg 12 minutes
Fascinating study of a small, mid-western town and its residents during wartime.

PAISA 1946 Roberto Rossellini 116 minutes
Rossellini followed *Rome Open City* with this film in six parts. It tells of the part-comic, part-tragic encounters of Italians, Germans and liberating Americans in Italy between 1942 and 1945. Georges Sadoul wrote 'Rossellini damned the horrors that war had brought to his country and his heart cry was emotionally and enthusiastically understood around the entire world.' Like *Rome Open City*, the film presents several brilliant improvised performances by non-actors, and again Rossellini explores the boundaries between documentary and fiction.

Thursday 16 December 8.00pm

BEGONE DULL CARE 1949 Norman McLaren 8 minutes
Norman McLaren and Evelyn Lambert's classic experimental short is a visually dazzling interpretation of three jazz pieces played by the Oscar Peterson Trio, with images painted, drawn and engraved directly onto film stock.

FUNNY FACE 1956 Stanley Donen 103 minutes
A glorious, glowing Technicolor musical in which a fashion photographer (Fred Astaire) discovers a serious, intellectual bookseller (Audrey Hepburn) and reluctantly transforms her into a stunning magazine model. With Richard Avedon's involvement in the photography, gowns by Givenchy, music by George and Ira Gershwin and stunning Paris locations, this s'wonderful, witty and visually beautiful musical is one of the career highlights of legendary director Stanley Donen (*On the Town*, *Singin' in the Rain*).

All films shown on 16mm prints supplied courtesy of NFVLS. Some titles may change subject to availability.