

ARTS ARRAY

Film Series • Fall 2009



Each film will be shown at the Abingdon Cinemall at 4 p.m. and again at 7:30 p.m. on the scheduled dates.

Afghan Star • Rudo y Cursi • The Class • Adoration • Easy Virtue • Moon • Food, Inc. • Chéri • Goodbye Solo • American Violet • The Hurt Locker • 12 • Taking Woodstock •

The Arts Array Film Series is a cultural outreach program sponsored by Virginia Highlands Community College, the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, Abingdon Cinemall, Virginia Intermont College, King College, and Emory & Henry College.

Students and employees of the sponsoring institutions are admitted free.
General admission is \$7.50.

For more information, contact Ben Jennings, Arts Array Coordinator, at (276) 739-2447 or bjennings@vhcc.edu.

AFGHAN STAR

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, AUGUST 31 AND SEPTEMBER 1

This documentary subverts the clichés that we have about Afghanistan. It captures the 2008 “Afghan Star” competition, obviously modeled on “American Idol,” and sees the four finalists from all parts of the country as a prism to examine the fragmented tribal culture of the country. What does it say about contemporary Afghanistan that the finale drew 11 million viewers, a third of the country’s entire population? (87 minutes)

RUDO Y CURSI

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 AND 8

This crowd-pleasing, rags-to-riches fable from Mexico stars the same two actors who were so acclaimed in *Y Tu Mamá También* a few years ago, Diego Luna and Garcia Bernal. They star as half brothers from southern Mexico who are plucked from rural obscurity and turned into professional soccer players in Mexico City. They achieve fame as Rudo and Cursi, the tough one and the corny one. (103 minutes)

THE CLASS

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 AND 15

Based on an actual memoir by a French high school teacher, this film reflects life in a contemporary Paris school where the students come from Africa, Asia and the Middle East—the New France. In contrast to American “feel good” films about idealistic teachers in a rough school, this deals with the difficulties (but also the rewards) of teaching. The film uses nonprofessional actors, improvising scenes from the memoir. (128 minutes)

ADORATION

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 AND 22

The latest film from Canada’s finest director Atom Egoyan is a compelling probe into the mysteries of human nature. Simon is an orphaned 16-year old who is trying to understand who his parents were. Denied the truth about his parents’ death by his grandfather, Simon resorts to an extreme reimagining of the events surrounding their deaths. He takes this story, drawn from actual news events, to the internet, leading to unexpected results. (100 minutes)

EASY VIRTUE

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 AND 29

This adaptation of a 1924 play by Noël Coward captures the essence of the social changes rocking England during the Roaring 20s. John Whittaker (Ben Barnes), a young Englishman, falls madly in love with Larita, a glamorous American widow (Jennifer Biel), and they marry impetuously. When John takes his new bride home to meet his parents, the mother (Kristin Scott Thomas) immediately loathes her and campaigns for her undoing. (97 minutes)

MOON

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5 AND 6

One of the rare serious science fiction films in recent years, *Moon*, set in the near future, dramatizes the life of astronaut Sam Bell, who is living on the far side of the moon and nearing completion of a three-year stint to mine earth's primary source of energy, Helium-3. However, suddenly his health begins to deteriorate and he has a near-fatal accident. Back at the base, as his mind seems to come unhinged (or does it?), he is confronted by a cloned younger version of himself. (97 minutes)

FOOD, INC.

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12 AND 13

The most important documentary of this year is a very disturbing portrait of how the food we eat in America has become a deceptively pre-fab, even hazardous industrial product. Our nation's food supply is controlled by a handful of corporations that often put profit ahead of consumer health, the livelihood of the American farmer, the safety of workers and our own environment. Of concern is the widespread obesity among children and an epidemic level of diabetes among adults. (94 minutes)

CHÉRI

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19 AND 20

Director Stephen Frears (*The Queen*) and screenwriter Christopher Hampton (*Atonement*) reunite to bring Colette's great novella of Belle Epoque Paris to the screen. The sensational tale begins as the beautiful Lea (Michelle Pfeiffer) contemplates retirement from her stature as Paris's most famous courtesan. Her plans are cut short when she is approached by her former rival Charlotte Peloux (Kathy Bates), who encourages Lea to teach her disaffected son a thing or two about women. (92 minutes)

GOODBYE SOLO

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27 AND 28

The most critically acclaimed movie of the year is set in our region. On lonely roads outside Winston-Salem and then at Blowing Rock, two men forge an improbable friendship that will change their lives forever. Solo is a warm-hearted, extroverted young cabdriver from Senegal. William is an elderly, tough, reserved, Southern good ol' boy. A cynic might call their black/white, young/old, happy/crotchety chemistry a movie convention, but the result is a soul-cleansing, powerful experience. (91 minutes)

AMERICAN VIOLET

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2 AND 3

This hard-hitting film is an exposé of racism still present in many parts of America today. Based on a true story, the film is about a young African-American single mother Dee Roberts who struggles to make ends meet in a small Texas town. When cops arrest her in a drug sweep, she insists on her innocence. Refusing a plea bargain that would allow her to avoid jail time, Roberts stands up against a corrupt law enforcement and judicial system. (103 minutes)

THE HURT LOCKER

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9 AND 10

By far the best film about the Iraqi War, this is an intense portrayal of elite soldiers who have one of the most dangerous jobs in the world, disarming bombs in the heat of combat. When James, a new sergeant, takes over the team amidst violent combat, he recklessly plunges them into urban combat. As the men struggle to control their new leader, the city explodes into chaos, and James's true character reveals itself in a way that will change each man forever. (131 minutes)

12

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16 AND 17

This new film by Russia's leading director, Nikita Mikhalkov, is an adaptation of the American classic Twelve Angry Men to a Russian context. In this film there are 12 characters. 12 truths. A gym adjusted for deliberations. The defendant is an 18-year-old Chechen boy accused of the first degree murder of his stepfather, an officer in the Russian army. One by one each man takes center stage to confront, connect, and confess while the accused awaits a verdict. (153 minutes)

TAKING WOODSTOCK

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23 AND 24

Ang Lee's new film is a comedy about Elliot Tiber, who organized the legendary Woodstock concert almost singlehandedly as the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce in Bethel, New York, until help arrived from Manhattan rock music professionals. The film stars Emile Hirsch, Jack Black and Liev Schreiber. The laid-back comedy is a sparkling effort to capture (in Lee's words) "the last moment of innocence" in America. (104 minutes)