

Bridges to the World

International Film Festival

February 13 – March 16, 2012

7 pm

Five Countries

Brazil, *House of Sand*

Japan, *Hula Girls*

Austria, *The Inheritors*

Sri Lanka, *The Tender Trap*

Turkey, *Ice Cream / Scream*

Five Venues

Frostburg University

Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts

Salisbury University

Southern Maryland Higher Education Center

Towson University

Sponsored by:

Maryland's Office of the Secretary of State,
International Division

www.sos.state.md.us/international

World Artists Experiences

www.worldartists.org

Towson University Dates:

2/17 Brazil, 2/24 Japan, 3/2 Austria,

3/9 Sri Lanka, 3/16 Turkey

**If the university is closed, the film will be canceled*

Van Bokkelen Hall Auditorium



Dear Friends,

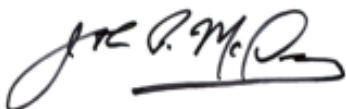
Welcome to the World Artists Experiences/Maryland's Office of the Secretary of State International Division fourth annual international film festival. The theme, *Building Bridges*, is a recognition of the State's global reach and a reflection of those connections here in Maryland.

The month-long celebration features films from five countries: Austria, Brazil, Japan, Sri Lanka, and Turkey. All films are being screened in five distinct regions of Maryland: Annapolis, California, Frostburg, Salisbury and Towson.

Our hope is that you will gain the spirit of each of the countries represented in the film. The films were selected in connection with the Embassy of each of the countries. Each film will be introduced, screened, and followed by a discussion.

We would like to sincerely thank the planning committee, Robert Cooper, Greg Faller, who also wrote the program essays, June Krell-Salgado, Deborah Patterson and Mel D. Powell. We also acknowledge all of the volunteers and in-kind sponsors who have generously contributed their time and resources to the festival, especially the host venue representatives who have shown tremendous hospitality throughout the planning and delivery of this event. Without your support, this would not have been possible.

Sincerely yours,



John P. McDonough
Secretary of State



Betty McGinnis
Founder and President
World Artists Experiences

World Artists Experiences is a non-profit organization which bridges international understanding through cultural and citizen diplomacy in schools, colleges, and communities to foster respect, trust, hope, and peace in the world. The organization's four goals are: Ambassador Series of World Experiences in communities; Cultural Immersion opportunities; International Education; and Sustainable Development. For further information, contact Betty McGinnis at wae@comcast.net www.worldartists.org

The International Division for Maryland's Office of the Secretary of State strives to foster global awareness and increase the level and consistency of open dialogue and exchange between Maryland's citizens and institutions and their international counterparts. Among its responsibilities is the administration of the Maryland Sister States Program. The Maryland Sister States Program has been in existence for thirty-one years and currently includes ten active relationships including partnerships in Brazil, China, Estonia, Japan, Liberia, Mexico, Poland, Russia, South Korea, and Vietnam. For more information contact Mendy Nitsch, Director of International Affairs for the Office of the Secretary of State, at mnitsch@sos.state.md.us

Casa de Areia (2005) **[House of Sand]**

Brazil

Co-Produced and Directed by
Andrucha Waddington

Introduced by Dr. Lea Ramsdell,
Associate Professor of Foreign Languages
and Director of Latin American Studies
and Dr. Alan Marcus, Assistant Professor
of Geography, Towson University



House of Sand offers a hypnotic meditation on matriarchy, survival, and the acceptance of life's inexplicable twists. Set in the surreal desert landscape of Lençóis Maranhenses National Park on the northern coast of Brazil, this visually breathtaking film follows three generations of women as they struggle with their isolated existence. A pregnant Áurea (Fernanda Torres) and her mother Dona Maria (Fernanda Montenegro) are brought to the region in 1910 by Áurea's fanatical husband. After his sudden death, the two women learn to co-exist with the *quilombolas* (runaway slaves) who inhabit the region. Áurea has a daughter (named Maria after her grandmother), visits a group of scientists studying a solar eclipse, loses her mother, falls in love, watches her daughter grow up, raises an adoptive family, and meets a military officer looking for a missing pilot – all as 60 years invariably flow by like the constantly shifting sand dunes. *House of Sand* lacks a narrative and instead focuses on the metaphoric relationship between the landscape, time, and the three women. The film builds not to a climax but to quiet understanding, an existential intuition, of what life offers (and fails to offer) and how we adapt.

House of Sand features Fernanda Montenegro, Brazil's "First Lady" of Theatre and Television, perhaps best known for her Oscar nominated performance in *Central Station* (1998) and her real-life daughter Fernanda Torres, international award-winning actress including Cannes in 1986. In a beautiful casting contrivance, these two actresses play the various generations of the same characters. Montenegro plays Dona Maria, the older Áurea, and the older Maria; Torres plays Áurea and her daughter Maria. This doubling (especially the final scene where Montenegro plays both roles) echoes Waddington's thematic emphasis on time and circularity – everything changes but nothing changes; momentous global events are as significant as intimate personal exchanges.

Andrucha Waddington, along with Walter Salles, Fernanado Meirelles, and Paulo Caldas, is one of the biggest names in the new generation of Brazilian filmmakers. He is also the husband of Fernanda Torres and son-in-law of Fernanada Montenegro; *House of Sand* was written for them. The film also provides a feminist perspective in which men keep upsetting nature's balance either through war, scientific exploration, or adventure and women find a way to make sense of it. Men may make *things* happen, but women make *life* happen.

House of Sand was nominated for 12 Cinema Brazil Grand Prizes. It is rated R for one scene of graphic sexuality. The film runs 115 minutes. You can watch the official trailer at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=algdilTBfRs>.

Hura Gâru (2006)

[*Hula Girls*]

Japan

Co-Written and Directed by
Lee Sang-il

Introduced by Dr. Ping Fu, Assistant
Professor of Chinese and Asian Studies,
Towson University



Hula Girls is based on a true story. Through the 1950s, the Joban Mine in Iwaki (on the eastern coast of Japan about 3 hours north of Tokyo) was Japan's largest coal mine. As Japan reduced its dependence on coal, the future of the mine – and the mining community – was threatened. By 1965, 2000 people had lost their jobs. To reverse this economic disaster, the mining company decided to exploit the hot springs of the area and create a resort. One year later the Joban Hawaiian Center opened; the first theme park in Japan and the only one to feature a dance troupe. In the first of many “green approaches” to sustaining the local economy, the center trained 18 girls from the town to perform the hula. The center was a great success and by the early 1970s attendance hit over 1.5 million visitors a year. Today, as Spa Resort Hawaiians, it is the 10th most popular theme park in the country. Damaged in last year's earthquake, the resort reopened in October 2011.

This history of the founding of the resort is told through the imagined interaction of the miners' daughters and their families, the company executives, and a hula teacher from Tokyo. *Hula Girls* offers a warm-hearted and funny success story as it examines topics of economic survival, friendship, cultural misconceptions and fears, growing up, and being an outsider.

These themes often appear in director Lee Sang-il's films. He is considered a *zainichi*, a member of Japan's ethnic Korean community. His early films, *Blue Chong* (2000), *Border Line* (2002), and *69* (2005) addressed issues of minority identity and the fraying of Japan's social fabric; they are presented again in *Hula Girls* but in a humorous and often comical way. If you liked *The Full Monty* (1997) and *Billy Elliot* (2000) you will thoroughly enjoy *Hula Girls*.

The film stars Etsushi Toyokawa (as Yojiro) one of Japan's most highly regarded leading men. He has been nominated twice for Best Supporting Actor and three times for Best Actor between 1993 (when he won the Newcomer of the Year Award) and 2011. It also showcases the talents of Yasuko Matsuyuki (as Madoka Hirayama), one of Japan's best known singers and actresses and Yu Aoi (as Kimiko), a rising young popular star.

Hula Girls was nominated for 11 Japanese Academy Awards and won four: Best Film, Director, Screenplay, and Supporting Actress (Yu Aoi). It was also Japan's entry for Best Foreign Language Film at the 2007 Academy Awards. Recent screenings of the film helped raise money for the Northern Japan Earthquake Relief Fund. You can watch the official trailer at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nHakMqGbbg>. The film runs 120 minutes.

Die Siebtebauer (1998)

[The Inheritors]

Austria

Written and Directed by
Stefan Ruzowitsky

Introduced by Dr. Michael O'Pecko,
Professor of Foreign Languages (German),
Towson University



If a slave becomes a master, what are the consequences? This question forms the core of *The Inheritors*, a bawdy but tragic allegory about class, economics, freedom, gender, and social injustice. Seven hard-working peasants unexpectedly inherit their brutal master's farm (the literal translation of the title is "the one-seventh farmers"). This small group now has the opportunity to work for themselves, but never having owned anything they don't really know what to do. The other farmers and the self-righteous villagers however know exactly what to do – crush them. The more successes the seven farmers experience the more the traditional social order unravels and the more vigorously the other landowners conspire to reclaim the property. By using the law, the church, money, and violence the entrenched authorities reassert their power. But at what cost?

Woven into the main story line is a murder mystery, a maternal melodrama, and some surreal comedy. Who is the woman who killed the farmer? What is the truth behind Lukas' status as a foundling? Why does an elephant visit? How does the past influence the present? Can the themes of this film also apply allegorically to the recent Arab Spring and the Occupy Movement? Do we view politics as a simple dialectic between oppression and revolt? *The Inheritors* may provide some answers.

The Inheritors was Stefan Ruzowitsky's second major film. He then directed two very well received horror films (*Anatomy* [2000] and *Anatomy 2* [2003]) and the Oscar winning Best Foreign Language film, *The Counterfeiters* (2007). *The Inheritors* stars Lars Rudolph (Severin), an avant-garde musician and actor who won the Best Young Actor at the 1997 Max Ophüls Festival; Simon Schwarz (Lukas), who won the Best Young Actor at the 1998 Max Ophüls Festival; and Sophie Rois (Emmy) one of Germany's top TV and film actresses who won Best Actress at the German Film Awards in 2009 and 2011. The film was shot by Peter von Haller who borrowed the colors, compositions, and subject matter from famous Dutch painters such as Vermeer, Steen, and van Ostade.

The Inheritors was internationally acclaimed and served as Austria's official entry into the 1999 Academy Awards. The film runs 95 minutes and is rated R. You can watch the official trailer at <http://www.imdb.com/video/screenplay/vi3079536921>.

Sankranthi (2006)

[The Tender Trap]

Sri Lanka

Directed by Anuruddha
Jayasinghe

Introduced by Mr. Harjant Gill, Visiting
Instructor in Anthropology, Towson University



A character study about romantic domination, *The Tender Trap* explores the result of hidden desires, jealousy, psychological manipulation, and residual post-colonial sensibilities. Sexual tensions and gender issues have developed between Dr. Gerad (a middle-aged primatologist), his young wife (Pam), and his young assistant (Sunimal). Suspecting Pam of having an affair with Sunimal, Dr. Gerad adapts his field research on primate behavior to expose their relationship and reassert his control. He sets a “trap” (more cruel than tender) that ends in an unexpected tragedy. The film cleverly plays not only on the undeniable erotic and emotional similarities between humans and apes, but also on the need of both species to maintain power and authority – especially over one’s mate. Much of this is implied through looks, half-completed gestures, off-screen action, and sound. Nothing is particularly overt yet the consequences are profoundly obvious.

Sangeetha Weeratratne (Pam) is an award-winning actress of Sri Lankan cinema. Her first major role was in *Saptha Kanya* (1993) when she won the Sarasaviya Best Newcomer Award. She also won the Sarasaviya Best Actress Award in 2001 for *Aswesuma* and was crowned the Sarasaviya Most Popular Actress for three consecutive years from 2001-2003. As a major star in Sri Lanka, appearing in over 50 films, she was able to start her own production company in 2006. Bimal Jayakody (Sunimal) and W. Jayasiri (Dr. Gerad) are both established and very popular stars in Sri Lankan TV dramas and film. Anuruddha Jayasinghe was a pioneering TV director who created a series of very popular television dramas. He gave up television for feature filmmaking because he wanted to create works that not only entertain, but also make people think. *The Tender Trap* was his debut film and competed in the World Cinema Section of the International Film Festival of India in 2006.

Sri Lankan cinema, which began in 1947, produces films predominantly in the Sinhalese language. For many years, Sinhalese films were shot in southern India using the conventions of Indian cinemas (mostly Tamil and Malayalam). But starting in the 1950s, Sinhalese cinema broke away from the hegemony of Indian cinema and established its own signature that included location shooting in Sri Lanka (*The Tender Trap* was shot in one of Sri Lanka’s many nature reserves), a realistic almost documentary approach, and the exclusion of song and dance numbers. After its creative peak in the 1960s and early 1970s, Sinhalese cinema entered a box office decline caused in part by the Sri Lankan Civil War (1983-2009). Jayasinghe’s most recent film, *Bombs and Roses* (2009) questions the terrorist activities of the civil war.

The Tender Trap runs 80 minutes. You can watch the film at <http://lkvideos.com/view/31768/sankranthi-sinhala-full-movie>.

Dondurmam Gaymak (2006)

[Ice Cream I Scream]

Turkey

Written, Directed, and Co-produced
by Yüksel Aksu



Introduced by Dr. Ayse Dayi Assistant Professor of Women's & Gender Studies,
Towson University and Founder of the Center for Transnational Women's Issues

Set in the town of Mugla (near the Aegean Sea about 800 km directly south of Istanbul and 600 km southwest of Ankara), *Ice Cream I Scream* is an award winning comedy about...ice cream. Using a cast of non-professional actors from the town – except for the lead played by popular theatre, TV, and film star Turan Özdemir – director Aksu creates a quirky story that taps into his youthful experiences as an apprentice to an ice cream salesman. Independent salesman Ali (Özdemir) tours the rural areas around Mugla on his new yellow motorcycle and cart selling homemade ice cream. When his bike and cart disappear, he blames the big ice cream companies and seeks revenge. But did one of them really steal his bike and cart; or is someone else responsible?

Evoking Italian Neo-Realism (the film is in many ways a comedic homage to De Sica's *Ladri di biciclette* [1948]), *Ice Cream I Scream* comments on religion, sex, marriage, drinking, politics, and capitalism. Ali wants to be as successful as the big companies, but at the same time blames them for corrupting the people with artificially flavored and colored ice cream. He uses television ads, but can afford only cheap commercials for local television. He takes out bank loans to expand, but to where? Ali may be compared to Don Quixote fighting against changing times and values and the influx of large transnational corporations—and his own dreams.

Yüksel Aksu was born in 1966 in Mugla. He received his master's degree from the Cinema-TV Department at Dokuz Eylül University. He started his career as an assistant director in television, then worked as an assistant producer in feature films, and later directed several popular TV series. *Ice Cream I Scream* was his first feature film. Like much comedy, it plays with stereotypes and offers a good dose of crude humor. For Western audiences, it's important to understand that most Turks live in sophisticated metropolitan areas and that the figure of the undereducated "rural man" is both nostalgic and a convenience for (often vulgar) comedy.

Ice Cream I Scream was Turkey's official submission to the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language film at the 2007 Oscars. It also won awards at the Istanbul International Film Festival, the Ankara Movie Awards, and the Queens (NY) World Film Festival. The film runs 100 minutes. You can visit Yüksel Aksu's website at <http://www.yukselaksu.com>.

UPCOMING EVENTS

WAMMFEST

Women and Minorities in Media

Join us for the 5th annual WAMMFest, (Women And Minorities in Media Festival) and celebrate and encourage the advancement of women and minorities in technical media production, such as audio, film and video. For information visit www.towson.edu/wamm. Admission is free and open to the public.

Student & Professional Submission Screenings

Guest Artists Jamil Walker Smith and Brittany Ballard

Van Bokkelen Hall Auditorium

Friday, March 30 WAMM Winners 6 - 10 p.m.

Master Classes with Guest Artists Jamil Walker Smith and Brittany Ballard for two hour

Media Center

Saturday, March 31, 3 - 6 p.m.

Reserve a seat through the WAMMFest website, available through <http://www.towson.edu/emf/events.asp> Seats are limited. Free to the public.

Screening of The American Dream, Q&A with the filmmakers and a reception to follow

Van Bokkelen Hall Auditorium

Saturday, March 31, 6 - 9 p.m.

THE ANNUAL STUDENT MEDIA ARTS FESTIVAL SCREENINGS AND AWARDS

Van Bokkelen Hall Auditorium and the Media Center

Saturday, May 12, Reception 5:30 - 6:45 p.m.; Screenings and Awards 7 p.m.

Best student projects in Documentary, Narrative, Experimental, Music Video, Corporate, Audio Documentary, and other categories will be screened and awards presented. For more information visit www.towson.edu/emf. Admission is free.

www.towson.edu/artscalendar
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