

UNSHOWN CINEMA:

THE ANIMATED FILMS THAT GOT AWAY

**A Special Series of Rare Animated Works at the American
Cinematheque. Presented in Association with the Los Angeles Film
Critics Association (LAFCA)**

September 22 – 24 at the Egyptian and Aero Theatres

In this outgrowth of the L.A. Film Critics Association's ongoing **FILMS THAT GOT AWAY** project, the focus is on great and rarely shown animated features and short films, none of which have received commercial theatrical distribution in the U.S.. This ambitious and delightful program includes first-ever English-subtitled version of **Ladislav Starewitch's REYNARD THE FOX (LE ROMAN DE RENARD)** – a legendary but little seen animated feature whose premiere predated Disney's **SNOW WHITE** by a full year – and works by contemporary masters, including Japanese animation maestro **Hayao Miyazaki**, New York-based veteran **George Griffin** and renowned Russian expatriate filmmaker **Igor Kovalyov**. Our series is also home to edgy and brilliant short films, including **Steffen Schaffler's** Oscar-nominated chiller **"The Periwig-Maker"**, Chicago-based animator **Lisa Barcy's** intricate and hilarious **"The Guilt Trip"** and L.A. homeboy **J. J. Villard's** dark and daring Bukowski adaptation **"Son Of Satan"**. Also featured in this program: A rare screening of the 1980 Oscar nominee **"All Nothing" (Tout Rien)** by Canada's living legend, animator **Frederic Back**. See a once-in-a-lifetime bigscreen presentation of Miyazaki's rarest feature-length project, **Yoshifumi Kondo's WHISPER OF THE HEART**. Experience **DANGEROUS VISIONS**, our evening of groundbreaking shorts that are definitely NOT for the kids! View our two-film tribute to **FRENCH ANIMATION MASTERS – THEN AND NOW**. Plus: Premieres! Panels! A continent of wonders awaits at our Egyptian/Aero mini-festival of **UNSHOWN CINEMA: THE ANIMATED FILMS THAT GOT AWAY**.

Series produced by Gwen Deglise and Ray Greene. Special feature animation programming consultant: Charles Solomon. Animated shorts programmed by Ray Greene and Gwen Deglise. Program assistance from Margot Gerber, Robert Koehler, Wade Major, Andrew Crane and Chris D. LAFCA and the Cinematheque would like to thank: The Museum of Modern Art (New York); the Canadian Consulate (Los Angeles); the French Consulate (New York); the Estate of Ladislav Starewitch; Canal +; Scott Roesch/Atom Films.

EGYPTIAN THEATRE - Friday, September 22 – 7:30 PM

Filmmakers In-Person for Panel Discussion + Rare Films and World Premieres

DANGEROUS VISIONS:

ANIMATED SHORTS FOR CONNOISSEURS & GROWN-UPS

DANGEROUS VISIONS - Program Order:

- PANDORAMA
- TOUT RIEN (ALL NOTHING)
- BATTLE OF LANKA
- THE GUILT TRIP
- SON OF SATAN
- ATLAS GETS A DRINK
- MILCH
- A LITTLE ROUTINE
- THE PERIWIG-MAKER
- GRIEF AND BIRTH

Somewhere between the always-popular use of animation as a vehicle for fairytale and fable and the slapstick extremities of the “extra-sick-and-twisted” school, there is another country, filled with the tactile, the disturbing, the mundane and the visionary. **DANGEROUS VISIONS** is our program of animation for grown-ups and connoisseurs, dedicated to animated works of uncommon artistic excellence that create unique and often disquieting but fully realized worlds.

Acclaimed Russian-born animator **Igor Kovalyov** will be in attendance for our screening of “**Milch**” (US, 2005, 15 min.) an elliptical portrait of accumulating middle class betrayals that packs a novel’s worth of character detail into 15 minutes or less. Young turk animator **J. J. Villard** will be on hand with his stunning adaptation of Charles Bukowski’s “**Son Of Satan**” (US, 2003, 12 min.), an edgy and profane re-imagining of childhood as a homicide waiting to happen, which Manohla Dargis of the New York Times has praised for its “*rough-hewn beauty*” and Villard’s “*singular talent.*” In **Stefan Schaffler**’s Tim Burton-esque “**The Periwig-Maker**” (Germany, 1999, 15 min.), Dafoe’s “Journal of the Plague Year” is used as an eerie auditory counterpoint to an 18th Century wigmaker’s experience of bubonic death. Canada’s master animator **Frederic Back** received an Oscar nomination for his ecological masterwork “**All Nothing**” (**Tout Rien**) (Canada, 1980, 11 min.), a fable about Adam and Eve and the death of God.

In **George Griffin**'s ambiguously sweet “**A Little Routine**” (US, 1994, 7 min.), surrealist technique dramatizes a child's shifting perceptions of adulthood during a bedtime conversation between a father and daughter. Chicago-based **Lisa Barcy**’s “**The Guilt Trip, Or The Vaticans Take A Holiday**” (US, 2004, 14 min.) is a stop-motion tour-de-“farce” that makes Catholic guilt syndrome seem fun, starring Jesus Christ, Mary Magdalene and the late great Pope John Paul II.

In **Mike Overbeck's "Atlas Takes a Drink"** (US, 1999, 3:30 min) two fish make an act of civil disobedience against the laws of nature, with hilarious and snowballing results. **Plus: Two+One By Nina Paley.** Best remembered locally for her alternative comic strip Nina's Adventures (syndicated in the L.A. Reader, 1988 - 1995), **Nina Paley** has re-invented herself as a trailblazing feminist animator in her fascinating, idiosyncratic and ambitious works. **DANGEROUS VISIONS** will present two World Theatrical Premieres from Paley's animated feature-in-progress **SITA SINGS THE BLUES**, a re-imagining of the *Ramayana* of Hindu lore as an epic Betty Boop cartoon, with accompanying blues songs by Annette Hanshaw.

First, we debut the just-struck 35mm print of **"Battle Of Lanka,"** (US, 2006, 3 min.) the only **SITA** segment ever seen on film by any audience, anywhere. Next is **"Grief and Birth"** (US, 2006, 3 min.), a just-completed **SITA** segment! **PLUS:** A look back at Paley's **"Pandorama"** (US, 2000, 3 min.) a free-form stunner hand-drawn on 70mm IMAX short-ends presenting the "Pandora's Box" mythos in "Garden of Eden" terms. *Discussion following with filmmakers JJ Villard, Igor Kovalyov and Lisa Barcy moderated by LAFCA member and series programmer Ray Greene.*

EGYPTIAN THEATRE - Saturday, September 23 – 7:30 PM

SPECIAL PROGRAM:

French Animation Masterworks – Then and Now

RAINING CATS AND FROGS

(LA PROPHETIE DES GRENOUILLES)

(France, 2003, 90 min.)

Director **Jacques-Remy Girerd**

Calling all TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE fans! The first animated feature produced entirely within French borders in over two decades, director **Jacques-Remy Girerd's** whimsical and imaginative story recasts Noah's Ark as an award-winning contemporary fable and epic adventure story. In the amphibian kingdom, evidence is mounting that a new deluge will soon submerge the earth. After a harrowing storm, a multi-ethnic farm family and the animal inhabitants of a nearby zoo find themselves adrift on a floating barn in a seemingly endless sea. Equally an environmental parable and a pacifist commentary about hysteria in a time of crisis, this is the perfect animated feature for the age of AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH and the "terror alert," offering sanity and mediation as an antidote to our new era of anxiety. Six years in the making, RAINING CATS AND FROGS is a beautifully mounted film that is appropriate viewing for all ages, offering a painless way to introduce the whole family to the pleasures of foreign film-going. A refreshing hand-drawn animation style lends a storybook air to Girerd's delightful characters, which include argumentative elephants, amphibian weather forecasters and cackling carnivores with designs on the rest of the crew. *In French with English subtitles.*

PLUS: THE TABLE TURNS (LE TABLE TOURNANTE), (France, 1988, 95 min.) Dirs. **Paul Grimault, Jacques Demy**. The late, great animator Paul Grimault has been called "the Walt Disney of France" and is acknowledged as a primary influence by contemporary Japanese maestro Hayao Miyazaki. In this charming compendium of Grimault's career, Grimault (appearing as himself) leads the "Accordion Clown" from his masterwork THE KING AND THE MOCKINGBIRD on a guided, chronological tour of Grimault's best and most well-known works. Grimault re-edited his own films for inclusion here. The "Out-of-the-Inkwell"-like live action sequences in which Grimault and his creation interact were directed by the great French filmmaker Jacques Demy (THE UMBRELLAS OF CHERBOURG). A delightful introduction to and summation of one of European animation's greatest *oeuvres* (if we may be so French...). *In French with English subtitles.*

NOTE: This film is screening once at each venue:

EGYPTIAN THEATRE - Sunday, September 24 - 7:30 PM

And re-screening with a special panel discussion at:

AERO THEATRE - Saturday, September 23 – 3:00 PM; PANEL DISCUSSION TO FOLLOW hosted by Charles Solomon

*Hayao Miyazaki's Rarest Feature-Length Production -
Never Distributed Theatrically in the United States*

WHISPER OF THE HEART

(MIMI WO SUMASEBA)

(Japan, 1995, 111 min.)

Dir. **Yoshifumi Kondo**. Produced and written by **Hayao Miyazaki**.

In the mid-1990's, the great Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki (SPIRITED AWAY) wanted to begin mentoring a new generation of animation artists in Japan. The result was this gentle coming-of-age drama scripted, produced and storyboarded by Miyazaki and then directed by Yoshifumi Kondo (later animation director on PRINCESS MONONOKE), whom Miyazaki hoped would introduce new blood into the directors at his Studio Ghibli. Adapted from the *manga* by Aoi Hiragi, the film tells the story of Shizuku, a shy student with high school entrance exam worries and inchoate aspirations, who meets a magical cat on a commuter bus and follows it to a boutique where significant objects abound, each with a story of its own. Notable for its celebration of the mysteries of daily living, "*Miyazaki's script suggests that a sense of magic can exist, even in everyday Tokyo,*" according to animation historian Charles Solomon. The story of a young girl finding her voice both literally and figuratively, this is a film tinged by tragedy: Sadly, Yoshifumi Kondo died of a brain aneurysm in 1998. His only feature attests to his talent, and Miyazaki has yet to find an equally talented protégé. ***English Dubbed Version. Rare Miyazaki promotional merchandise will be given away at both the Egyptian and Aero screenings.***

AERO SCREENING ONLY:

In-Person Panel with English-Language Voice-Actors Hosted by Charles Solomon. Rare Miyazaki promotional merchandise will be given away at both the Egyptian and Aero screenings.

AERO THEATRE - Sunday, September 24 – 3:00 PM

THE FIRST-EVER ENGLISH-SUBTITLED VERSION OF A LOST CLASSIC

THE STORY OF THE FOX (LE ROMAN DE RENARD)

(France, 1937 & 1940-41), 65 min.

Dir. **Ladislav Starewitch**

PLUS RARE STAREWITCH SHORTS

LAFCA and the American Cinematheque are proud to present one of the most important animated films ever made in a rare American screening. Russian/French animation pioneer **Ladislav Starewitch** is considered the first animator ever to use stop-motion puppetry to tell coherent stories, and his alternately darkly humorous and lyrical works have influenced generations of animators, from George Pal to Jan Svankmajer to Tim Burton and the Brothers Quay. For Americans, REYNARD THE FOX (LE ROMAN DE RENARD) is his largely unseen masterpiece, a stop-motion marvel filmed mostly between 1929 and 1931 about the charming animal trickster of European folklore and his adventures as an unrepentant rogue. Shelved for six years as Starewitch adapted his techniques to the new medium of movie sound, this unique work had its world premiere in Paris in 1937 before being re-voiced and rescored for a 1940 – 1941 French re-release during the WWII German occupation. Starewitch’s techniques are remarkable for their cinematic sophistication, deploying crash zooms, whip pans and motion blurs to lend his whimsical, often life-sized puppet creations (some nearly as large as their creator) the feel of real life. Despite some overtly subversive political messages, the unfortunate Vichy connection has kept REYNARD THE FOX largely unseen in America. The film’s master elements languished in storage for 25 years after Starewitch’s death before being reassembled and restored in 1990, a restoration on which the current version is based. *Plus rare short films by Ladislav Starewitch. Screening to be introduced by animation historian Charles Solomon.*

ABOUT LAFCA’S ONGOING “THE FILMS THAT GOT AWAY” PROJECT:

“THE FILMS THAT GOT AWAY” is an ongoing project of the Los Angeles Film Critics Association dedicated to sponsoring and showcasing deserving cinematic works that have failed to find commercial distribution in the U.S.. Inaugurated with screenings at the AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE in 2005, the FTGA project has since expanded to include regular programs at the UCLA Film & Television Archive, including a three-film LAFCA/UCLA series during the recent 2006 Los Angeles Film Festival. “UNSHOWN CINEMA: The ANIMATED Films That Got Away” is LAFCA’s first excursion into rare animated works.