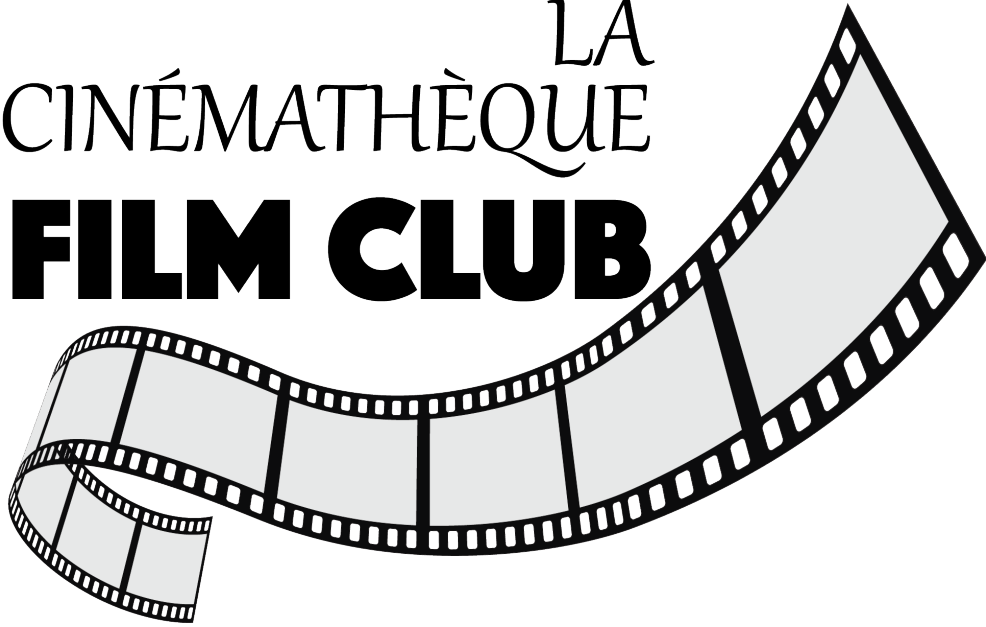


LA
CINÉMATHÈQUE
FILM CLUB



Great Directors
Spring 2017

Alain Resnais
1922-2014

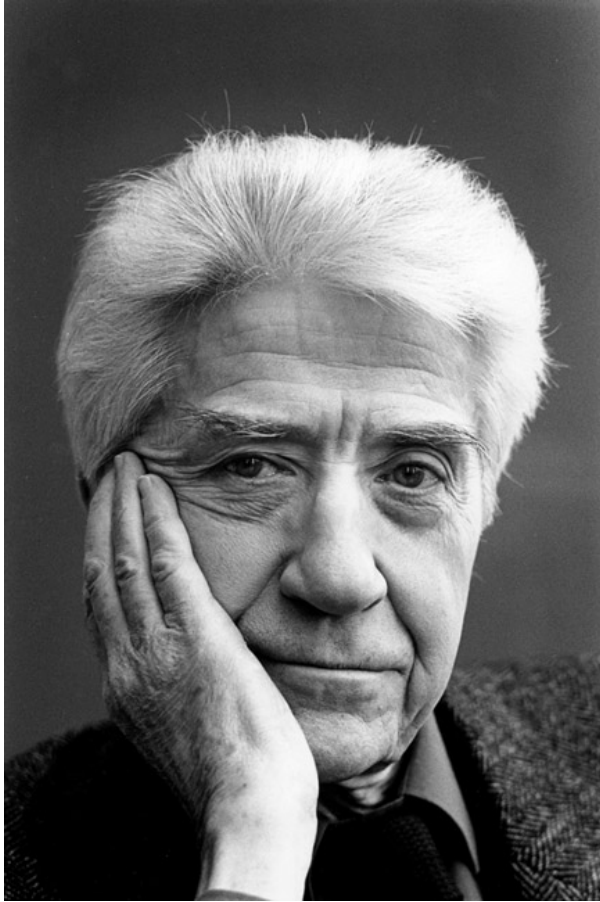
Hiroshima Mon Amour
(1948)

My American Uncle
(1980)

Marker, Resnais, Varda: Remembering the Left Bank Group

Robert Farmer • September 2009

Senses of Cinema: <http://sensesofcinema.com/2009/feature-articles/marker-resnais-var-da-remembering-the-left-bank-group/>



The Key Films of the Left Bank Group (1958-1962)

Resnais was the first of the Left Bank filmmakers to begin making films, and, unlike his Right Bank contemporaries, James Monaco notes that Resnais had had a practical, rather than theoretical, training. In total, Resnais had made 26 short documentaries before making his first feature film, *Hiroshima mon amour*, in 1959, and had gained a reputation as a highly accomplished documentary maker, the most important of his documentaries being *Nuit et brouillard* (*Night and Fog*, 1955). As is well documented, *Hiroshima mon amour* was initially intended to be another short documentary, not a fiction feature. Additionally, and unlike many New Wave projects, all Resnais' documentaries had been commissioned, including what was to become *Hiroshima mon amour*.

Hiroshima mon amour remains a complex and deeply thoughtful work that explores Resnais' preoccupation

with the themes of time and memory. However, it is also a highly political and literary work, and it sets the tone for much of Resnais' later works. The film was scripted by Marguerite Duras, who, at the time, was one of France's most well respected new novelists, and the film is set both in Japan and in France, with both a Japanese actor, Eiji Okada, and a French actor, Emmanuelle Riva. The outward story itself is not especially difficult to comprehend; it is set in the present (late 1950s Japan), and concerns a love affair between two unnamed married people, 'he' (Okada) and 'she' (Riva), who meet at various points during the woman's final twenty-four hours before she returns to France. She is an actor, making a film set in Hiroshima about peace (a film that we never see, but which exists within *Hiroshima mon amour* as a testament to the idea of the unmakeable film about Hiroshima), and he is an architect.

"[*My American Uncle*] is built around the ideas of French physician, writer and philosopher Henri Laborit, who plays himself in the film. It uses the stories of three people to illustrate Laborit's theories on evolutionary psychology regarding the relationship of self and society. René leaves the family farm to become an executive at a French textile firm. Janine leaves her proletarian family behind to become an actress who becomes involved with Jean, a well-educated bourgeois writer/politician. All three characters face difficult choices in life-changing situations that are designed to illuminate Laborit's ideas."- Wikipedia: (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_American_Uncle)

Filmography:

- **Life of Riley** (2014)
- **You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet** (2012)
- **Wild Grass** (2009)
- **Private Fears in Public Places** (2006)
- **Not on the Lips** (2003)
- **Same Old Song** (1997)
- **Smoking/No Smoking** (1993)
- **L'encyclopédie audio-visuelle** (TV Series documentary) (1 episode) - Gershwin (1993)
- **Lest We Forget** (segment "Pour Esteban Gonzalez Gonzalez, Cuba") (1991)
- **I Want to Go Home** (1989)
- **Mélo** (1986)
- **Love Unto Death** (1984)
- **Life Is a Bed of Roses** (1983)
- **My American Uncle** (1980)
- **Providence** (1977)
- **Stavisky...** (1974)
- **The Year 01** (sequence director "Séquence de New York") (1973)
- **Cinétracts** (Documentary) (1968)
- **Je t'aime, je t'aime** (1968)
- **Far from Vietnam** (Documentary) (segment "Claude Ridder") (1967)
- **The War Is Over** (1966)
- **Muriel, or The Time of Return** (1963)
- **Last Year at Marienbad** (1961)
- **Le chant du Styrene** (Documentary short) (1959)
- **Hiroshima Mon Amour** (1959)
- **Le mystère de l'atelier quinze** (Short) (1957)
- **Toute la mémoire du monde** (Documentary short) (1956)
- **Night and Fog** (Documentary short) (1955)
- **Statues also Die** (Documentary short) (1953)
- **Pictura** (Documentary) (segment "Goya") (1951)
- **Gauguin** (Short) (1950)
- **Guernica** (Short) (1950)
- **Châteaux de France** (Documentary short) (1948)
- **Les jardins de Paris** (Short) (1948)
- **Malfray** (Documentary short) (1948)
- **Van Gogh** (Documentary short) (1948)
- **Journée naturelle** (Documentary short) (1947)
- **L'alcool tue** (Short) (as Alzin Rezarail) (1947)
- **La bague** (1947)
- **Le lait Nestlé** (1947)
- **Portrait d'Henri Goetz** (1947)
- **Visite à César Doméla** (1947)
- **Visite à Félix Labisse** (1947)
- **Visite à Hans Hartung** (1947)
- **Visite à Lucien Coulaud** (1947)
- **Visite à Oscar Dominguez** (Documentary short) (1947)
- **Ouvert pour cause d'inventaire** (1946)
- **Schéma d'une identification** (1946)
- **L'aventure de Guy** (Short) (1936)