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# NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## 51ST CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FOCUSES A SPOTLIGHT ON ARCHITECTURE

*Bringing space- and design-themed films to Chicago from around the world;  
Featuring Two North American Premieres and Four U.S. Premieres*

(CHICAGO, Sept 30, 2015) - The 51st Chicago International Film Festival (Oct 15-29, 2015), in conjunction with the Chicago Architecture Biennial, announce the Festival's **Spotlight: Architecture+Space+Design** program. The Festival's Spotlight: Architecture+Space+Design program is supported by its Program Partners: Chicago Architecture Biennial, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Tribune Media, Italian Film Commission, and Italian Trade Agency. This year's Spotlight features two North American Premieres and four USA Premieres. More information about the program may be found at <http://www.chicagofilmfestival.com/spotlight>.

From Tokyo to Milan to Sao Paolo, the international selection showcases 11 new feature films, including notable portraits of architects, designers and buildings (**Concrete Love – The Bohm Family, Why A Film About Michele De Lucchi?, The Infinite Happiness**) and beautifully photographed depictions of contemporary and futuristic cities (**Obra, Invention, Under Electric Clouds**). From subways to skyscrapers, from down-and-out squatters to glass-house-dwellers, these films portray a range of people and characters interacting with extraordinary places and spaces.

In addition to the program of shorts, Chicago Film Archives Program and feature-length films (all listed below), the Spotlight features a discussion with architect Helmut Jahn on Sat, Oct 17 at 6:00pm at the AMC River East 21. World-renowned for his progressive architecture and constant innovation, Jahn has designed 16 buildings in Illinois, including Chicago's own United Airlines Terminal. He also designed skyscrapers in major cities around the world. Jahn will discuss his remarkable 49-year career in architecture and his unique vision, using clips from modern and classic films that showcase his designs and reflect his philosophy.

Rounding out the Spotlight: Architecture+Space+Design program, on Wednesdays throughout the Chicago Architecture Biennial (Oct-Dec 2015), local and visiting architects and designers will present **Architects on Film**. This program features films that have touched their lives and careers in conjunction with the Chicago International Film Festival's year-round programming. This highly curated selection ranges from films that have influenced architecture to those that can spark conversations about the intersection between film, architecture, philosophy, and

society. Screenings will be followed by conversations with presenters. This is a **free** event! No ticket required.

“We’re thrilled to have the Chicago International Film Festival as a Program Partner of the Chicago Architecture Biennial. The lineup of films in both the Spotlight and Architects on Film Programs dovetails with the objectives and philosophy of the Biennial,” says **Biennial Public Programs Manager Kate Keleman**. “Our collaboration is producing an insightful and unexpected conversation about the intersection of architecture and film. The Biennial-related film series expand both the Biennial and the Film Festival, two significant projects that encompass a global point of view.”

“Selecting the films for the Spotlight Architecture program was an exciting challenge for the programming team, as we stretched our ideas about the interplay between film, architecture and design. The creativity and diversity of the films in the program has exceeded our expectations. It’s a great honor to be a part of the inaugural Chicago Architecture Biennial,” added **Festival Programming Director Mimi Plauché**.

View the 2015 Festival lineup at [ChicagoFilmFestival.com/films](http://ChicagoFilmFestival.com/films). The full festival schedule is available at [ChicagoFilmFestival.com/schedule](http://ChicagoFilmFestival.com/schedule). Individual tickets and multi-film passes are available at [ChicagoFilmFestival.com/tickets](http://ChicagoFilmFestival.com/tickets).

#### **SPOTLIGHT: ARCHITECTURE+SPACE+DESIGN**

All films listed will receive their Chicago premiere at the Festival unless otherwise indicated.  
Festival screenings will be held at the AMC River East 21 Theater (322 E. Illinois St.).  
Program subject to change.

#### **Concrete Love - The Bohm Family**

CHICAGO PREMIERE

Country: Germany, Switzerland

Director: Maurizio Staerkle Drux

Synopsis: Prominent German architect Gottfried Böhm is celebrated for his buildings of concrete, steel, and glass. His three sons are also highly acclaimed. When the family matriarch, an architect herself and source of inspiration for all Böhm men, dies, their emotional foundation is shattered. Sensitive to form and emotion, Concrete Love lays bare the blueprint of a family.

- Screening 1: Thurs, Oct 22; 2:30pm
- Screening 2: Fri, Oct 23; 5:45pm

#### **Double Happiness**

CHICAGO PREMIERE

Country: Austria, China

Director: Ella Raidel

Synopsis: This surreal, exquisitely framed documentary looks at the construction of a near-exact replica of a scenic Austrian town—cobblestone by cobblestone—in an undeveloped Chinese tract of land. In a style both entrancing and playful, the film questions the difference between real and imagined, model and reality, raising thought-provoking questions about the nature of authenticity and happiness. Features insightful interviews with urban planners, designers, and trailblazing Beijing architect Ma Yansong.

- Screening 1: Sun, Oct 25; 6:00pm
- Screening 2: Tues, Oct 27; 4:00pm

#### **Greater Things**

USA PREMIERE

Country: UK, Japan

Director: Vahid Hakimzadeh

Synopsis: In this stunningly composed meditation on space and human relationships, an adrift Iranian architect, a disengaged Japanese couple, and a Lithuanian mixed martial arts fighter search for connection in modern Japan. From the stylishly designed shops of Tokyo to a minimalist glass suburban home to a mysterious tree house in the woods, *Greater Things* reveals the strange places we inhabit, and how they can both unite and divide us.

- Screening 1: Fri, Oct 16; 5:45pm
- Screening 2: Sat, Oct 17; 1:45pm

### **Helmut Jahn: An Architect's Life**

Country: N/A

Director: N/A

Synopsis: World-renowned for his progressive architecture and constant innovation, Helmut Jahn has designed 16 buildings in Illinois, including Chicago's own United Airlines Terminal. He has also designed skyscrapers in major cities around the world, from Brussels and Rotterdam to Bangkok, Shanghai, and Berlin, which boasts his celebrated Sony Center. Jahn will discuss his remarkable 49-year career in architecture and his unique vision, using clips from modern and classic films that showcase his designs and reflect his philosophy.

- Screening 1: Sat, Oct 17; 6:00PM

### **Illegal Portraits (Ritratti Abusivi)**

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

Country: Italy

Director: Romano Montesarchio

Synopsis: Welcome to Parco Saraceno, a derelict neighborhood in southeast Italy. Built in the 1960s, its run-down houses once held the promise of suburban coastal bliss. Now home to a community of squatters, the development is a portrait of both poverty and resilience. Without power or resources, the residents persevere, finding new ways to live among the ruins and maintain their way of life—and their dignity.

- Screening 1: Tues, Oct 20; 7:45pm
- Screening 2: Wed, Oct 21; 11:30am

### **The Infinite Happiness**

CHICAGO PREMIERE

Country: France, Denmark

Director: Ila Beka, Louise Lemoine

Synopsis: Copenhagen's "8 House," an ultramodern loop of apartments created by architect Bjarke Ingels, reinvents the concept of "home." Its 500 residents can traverse all nine floors by bike while their kids attend kindergarten on the ground floor. This exuberant documentary profiles the (mostly) happy residents, including a group of children who experience the best scavenger hunt ever, offering a hopeful, inspired picture of communal living by design.

- Screening 1: Sat, Oct 17; 2:15pm
- Screening 2: Wed, Oct 21; 11:30am

### **Invention**

USA PREMIERE

Country: Canada, France

Director: Mark Lewis

Synopsis: A meditative sensory experience from Canadian avant-garde artist Mark Lewis, *Invention* intimately explores our relationship to the physical space around us. Long, luxurious tracking shots take the viewer through museum works and modern cityscapes in Toronto, São Paulo, and Paris, panning and tilting at improbable angles to give a fresh perspective on the

everyday. Echoes of Koyaanisqatsi and Man With a Movie Camera infuse this poem of modern life.

- Screening 1: Fri, Oct 16; 7:30pm
- Screening 2: Wed, Oct 17; 12:30pm

### **Milano 2015**

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

Country: Italy

Director: various

Synopsis: From subways to skyscrapers, from antique monasteries to ornate mansions, from shuttered old theaters to the inimitable La Scala, this stunning omnibus feature captures the soul and majesty of the northern Italian city. Six Italian directors explore different facets of contemporary Milan. The result is a rich and eclectic portrait of urban life and spaces—both rooted in history and bursting with a diversity of architecture and humanity.

- Screening 1: Wed, Oct 21; 8:15pm
- Screening 2: Thurs, Oct 22; 12:00pm

### **Modern Metropolis: Mid-Century Chicago On Film**

Country: N/A

Director: various directors

Synopsis: Chicago's rich architectural tradition has long been a hallmark of the Windy City. In this evocative collection of shorts culled from the Chicago Film Archives dating from 1962 to 1976, go back in time to witness its urban glories. The films include dynamic "city-symphonies," an ode to stainless steel, and an admiring portrait of Louis Sullivan's Stock Exchange building and its woeful demolition.

- Screening 1: Sat, Oct 24; 2:00pm

*Note: This is a FREE event held at the Chicago Cultural Center*

### **Obra**

CHICAGO PREMIERE

Country: Brazil

Director: Gregorio Graziosi

Synopsis: When a complacent young architect in São Paulo discovers a burial ground at the site of his first construction project, he must reckon with hidden secrets that make him question the very foundation of his heritage. An entrancing meditation on urban alienation and repressed national memory filmed in stark, exquisitely composed black-and-white, Obra is a haunting portrait of contemporary Brazil in flux.

- Screening 1: Fri, Oct 16; 5:00pm
- Screening 2: Sun, Oct 18; 12:15pm

### **Shorts 8: The Tower Above The Earth - Architecture**

Countries: France, Iran, Israel, Poland, Switzerland, US

Directors: Teresa Czepiec, Sandy Pitetti, Miki Polonski, Chuck Przybyl, Matthieu Landour, Arash Nassiri

Description: The shorts takes a bright new view of space and design in cinema from claustrophobic urban spaces to hypnotic skylines and historic architecture coalesce, courtesy of Program Partner Jeanne Randall Malkin Family Foundation.

- Screening 1: Sat, Oct 24; 2:45pm

### **Under Electric Clouds (Pod elektricheskimi oblakami)**

USA PREMIERE

Country: Russia, Ukraine

Director: Aleksey German Jr.

Synopsis: In 2017 Russia, exactly 100 years after the Bolshevik Revolution, the world is on the verge of a new great war. An unfinished skyscraper looms on the horizon, casting an emblematic shadow over a society about to collapse. With breathtaking sci-fi imagery, this wildly strange magical realistic film interweaves the stories of seven individuals, from an architect to a Kyrgyz laborer, as it explores a dystopian dreamscape.

- Screening 1: Sun, Oct 25; 7:45pm
- Screening 2: Tue, Oct 27; 8:15pm

### **Underground Fragrance (Di Xia Xiang)**

USA PREMIERE

Country: China, France

Director: Di Xia Xiang

Synopsis: On the rapidly urbanizing outskirts of Beijing, Yong Le spends his days scouring homes scheduled for demolition for furniture to pawn and his nights in the sub-basement of a high-rise apartment building. After an accident blinds him, a nightclub dancer, hoping to secure a day job with a real estate developer, nurses him back to health. Produced by Tsai Ming-Liang, the film adapts his signature meditative social realism, revealing a world in which everyone, literally and figuratively, is looking to move up.

- Screening 1: Sun, Oct 18; 6:00pm
- Screening 2: Mon, Oct 19; 5:15pm
- Screening 3: Tue, Oct 20; 12:30pm

### **Why a Film About Michele De Lucchi? (Perché un film su Michele De Lucchi)**

CHICAGO PREMIERE

Country: Italy

Director: Alessio Bozzer

Synopsis: A portrait of the famous radical Italian designer and progenitor of the Maker Movement, this informative, playful documentary traces Michele De Lucchi's personal experiments and provocations. With De Lucchi serving as his own narrator, the film examines his pioneering achievements with the design movement Memphis, including the stripped-down "First Chair," the Oceanic Lamp, and a spectacular LED-lit bridge in Tbilisi, Georgia.

- Screening 1: Thurs, Oct 22; 6:00pm
- Screening 2: Mon, Oct 26; 3:30pm

### **ARCHITECTS ON FILM**

Festival screenings will be held at the Chicago Cultural Center's Claudia Cassidy Theater, 77 E Randolph St, Program subject to change.

### **The Hawks and the Sparrows**

Country: Italy (1966)

Director: Pier Paolo Pasolini

Featured Architect: Xavier Wrona, founder of the architecture office Est-ce ainsi, a structure working to refocus the architectural practice on its political consequences and its possible participation in the reform of "vivre ensemble."

Synopsis: In this whimsical fable from the legendary Italian director, an old man (played by the famous Keaton-esque clown Toto) walks along the dusty road of life with his empty-headed son. Joined by a philosophical crow, who asks probing questions about existence, father and son witness the complex contradictions of Italian life, from Christianity vs. Marxism, Church vs. State.

- Screening 1: Wed, Oct 14; 6:00pm

*Note: This is a FREE event held at the Chicago Cultural Center*

### **Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse**

Country: USA (1991)

Directors: Fax Bahr, George Hickenlooper

Featured Architect: Eric Ellingsen is currently teaching at the School of the Art Institute (SAIC) and has a practice called species of space.

Synopsis: This eye-opening documentary examines the outrageous behind-the-scenes making of Francis Ford Coppola's 1979 classic Apocalypse Now. With rarely seen archival footage shot by Coppola's wife, the film recounts how events on the Philippines-set production soon resembled the madness recounted in the story. Over-budget, with cast and crew bordering on the edge of insanity, the film is a revealing look at the extraordinary lengths that some will go to make their art.

- Screening 1: Wed, Oct 28; 6:00pm

*Note: This is a FREE event held at the Chicago Cultural Center*

### **Waste Land**

Country: USA (2010)

Director: Lucy Walker

Featured Architect: Emmanuel Pratt, Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Sweet Water Foundation and founding member of axill3C. He is also Director of Aquaponics for Chicago State University and teaches courses within the College of Arts and Sciences.

Synopsis: This Oscar-nominated documentary follows renowned artist Vik Muniz as he journeys from his home base in Brooklyn to the world's largest garbage dump in his native Brazil. There, he photographs an eclectic band of "catadores"—people who scrounge for recyclable materials. As he collaborates with these inspiring characters to recreate photographs of themselves, Waste Land offers stirring evidence of the transformative power of art and the alchemy of the human spirit.

- Screening 1: Wed, Nov 18; 6:00pm

*Note: This is a FREE event held at the Chicago Cultural Center*

### **My Winnipeg**

Country: USA (2007)

Director: Guy Maddin

Featured Architect: Design With Company's cofounders Stewart Hicks and Allison Newmeyer, who are also assistant professors at the University of Illinois at Chicago

Synopsis: A self-described "docu-fantasia," this rollicking cinematic poem charts the not-exactly-true goings-on in the birthplace of Canadian filmmaker Guy Maddin (The Saddest Music in the World). Brazenly blurring the borders of nonfiction and dream, Maddin recounts his return to his childhood home, revisiting key moments from his adolescence and his city's history (from a semi-nude civic pride event to a jazz-age séance ballet!) My Winnipeg is a wild ride of remembrance, place, and imagination.

- Screening 1: Wed, Nov 4; 6:00pm

*Note: This is a FREE event held at the Chicago Cultural Center*

### **The Wiz**

Country: USA (1978)

Director: Sidney Lumet

Featured Architect: Amanda Williams whose work centers on color, race, and space. She uses vivid, culturally derived colors to paint abandoned houses on Chicago's South Side, marking the pervasiveness of undervalued Black space. Accolades include a 3Arts Award, a Joyce Foundation scholarship, and a Robert James Eidlitz Fellowship in Ethiopia.

Synopsis: The film version of the popular Broadway musical retells the events of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" through the eyes of Dorothy, a young African-American kindergarten teacher (Diana Ross) who's "never been below 125th Street." On her journey down the yellow brick road of '70s Manhattan, she encounters a garbage-stuffed scarecrow (Michael Jackson), a

broken-down tin man (Nipsey Russell), and a cowardly lion (Ted Ross) posing as a stone statue outside a museum. Together, they seek out the Wiz (Richard Pryor), a powerful wizard living in Emerald City who may be able to help Dorothy get home.

- Screening 1: Wed, Dec 9; 6:00pm

*Note: This is a FREE event held at the Chicago Cultural Center; featuring a conversation with Jacqueline Stewart, Professor in the University of Chicago's Department of Cinema and Media Studies. Stewart's research and teaching explore African American film cultures from the origins of the medium to the present, as well as the archiving and preservation of moving images, and "orphan" media histories, including nontheatrical, amateur, and activist film and video. She directs the South Side Home Movie Project and is co-curator of the L.A. Rebellion Preservation Project at the UCLA Film and Television Archive. She also serves as an appointee to the National Film Preservation Board. She is currently researching the racial politics of moving image preservation and is also completing a study of the life and work of African American actor/writer/director Spencer Williams.*

### **Voices of Cabrini**

Country: USA (1999)

Director: Ronit Bezalel

Featured Architect: Andres Hernandez, an artist-designer-educator who works with youth and adults to interpret, critique, and re-imagine the physical, social and cultural environments we inhabit.

Synopsis: Shot over a four-year period, this gripping documentary chronicles the demolition of Cabrini Green, Chicago's most infamous housing development. Told sympathetically from the perspectives of the people being uprooted, the film shows the startling evictions of longtime residents from the city's mid-city ghetto. A sobering look at "city planning" at work, Voices of Cabrini is a valuable historical look at a city in transition—and those left behind.

- Screening 1: Wed, Oct 21; 6:00pm

*Note: This is a FREE event held at the Chicago Cultural Center; featuring a conversation with filmmaker Ronit Bezalel. Bezalel has been creating social issue documentary films for over 25-years. Her latest documentary, "70 Acres in Chicago: Cabrini Green" premiered at the Black Harvest Film Festival to sold out crowds and will be screening at Chicago's Gene Siskel Film Center from November 13 to 19, 2015.*

### **ABOUT CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE BIENNIAL**

The Chicago Architecture Biennial seeks to convene the world's leading practitioners, theorists, and commentators in the field of architecture and urbanism to explore, debate, and demonstrate the significance of architecture to contemporary society. The 51st Chicago International Film Festival is a Program Partner of the Chicago Architecture Biennial.

### **ABOUT FESTIVAL SPOTLIGHT: ARCHITECTURE+SPACE+DESIGN**

The 51st Chicago International Film Festival's program of architecture-themed and design-related films celebrates the remarkable spirit and outstanding representations of innovative architecture and design in cinema. From narrative features and documentaries to a variety of shorts, this international selection is comprised of both contemporary and classic films and features the work of both celebrated visionaries (Bjarke Ingels, Michael De Lucchi, and Gottfried Böhm) in addition to chronicling ordinary people and characters interacting with extraordinary and complex spaces. Spotlight: Architecture+Space+Design also includes parallel programming, such as panel discussions and talks with directors, architects, and designers, fostering in-depth explorations of the connections between these arts.

### **ABOUT ARCHITECTS ON FILM**

On Wednesdays throughout the Chicago Architecture Biennial, local and visiting architects and designers present films that have touched their lives and careers. The highly curated selection

ranges from films that have influenced their own thoughts on architecture to those that can spark conversations about the intersection between film, architecture, philosophy, and society. Screenings will be followed by conversations with presenters. This is a free event! No ticket required.

### FESTIVAL PARTNERS

The 51st Chicago International Film Festival's sponsors include Gold Festival Partners: TIAA-CREF, Columbia College Chicago, Wintrust Community Banks; Official Airline: American Airlines; Headquarters Hotel: JW Marriott Chicago; Silver Festival Partners: Bloomberg, Intersites; Platinum Media Partners: National CineMedia (NCM), JC Decaux, Michigan Avenue Magazine; Gold Media Partners: WTTW11, Time Out Chicago, WBEZ91.5, WXRT-FM, WBBM Newsradio, and The Hollywood Reporter; Bronze Festival Partners: Stella Artois, AARP, Tribune Media; Participating Partners: SundanceNow Doc Club, Whole Foods, Wansas Tequila, Cultivate Studios, Netrix, KIND, OtterBox, Optimus, Sound Investment; Official Vehicle: Volvo; Participating Hotels: Public Chicago, The Whitehall Hotel, theWit and Loews Chicago Hotel; and Cultural Partners: Consulate General of Argentina in Chicago, Consulate General of Italy in Chicago, Italian Cultural Institute of Chicago, Italian Film Commission, Italian Trade Agency, Polish Film Institute, Goethe Institut, Austrian Cultural Forum New York, ANCINE National Cinema Agency of Brazil, and Consulate General of Israel to the Midwest. With Foundation and Government support from the National Endowment of the Arts, Alphawood Foundation Chicago, the Illinois Arts Council, and Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events, and the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation. Additional support provided by Allstate, the Chicago Architecture Biennial, Dark Horse Wine, Effen Vodka, Lavazza, and SkinnyPop.

### ABOUT CINEMA/CHICAGO

Cinema/Chicago is a not-for-profit arts and education organization dedicated to encouraging better understanding between cultures and to making a positive contribution to the art form of the moving image. The Chicago International Film Festival is one of the year-round programs presented by Cinema/Chicago, which also include the Chicago International Film Festival Television Awards, CineYouth Festival, INTERCOM Competition, International Screenings Program, and Education Program. Celebrating its 51st anniversary this year, the Chicago International Film Festival is North America's longest-running competitive film festival.

The 51st Chicago International Film Festival runs Oct 15-29, 2015 at the AMC River East 21. Tickets are on sale now. Complete details at [ChicagoFilmFestival.com](http://ChicagoFilmFestival.com).

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