

LA VIE EN ROSE

FRENCH CINEMA, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND THE  
LEGACY OF EDITH PIAF

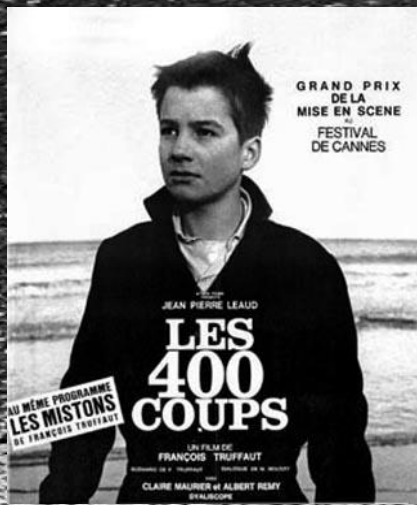
Caroline Jun, Mitchell Alexander, Danielle  
Zielonka

# DIFFERENT GENRES OF FRENCH FILMS



## French New wave (*La Nouvelle Vague*)

- **e**merged in the late 1950s and the early 1960s.
- In the 50s, a group of French film critics banded together and formed a magazine of film criticism called *Cahiers du Cinema*, it was led by André Bazin and Jacques Doniol-Valcroze.
- The *Cahiers* had 2 guiding principles:
  - 1) A rejection of classical montage-style filmmaking in favor of: *mise-en-scene*, or, literally, "placing in the scene" (favoring the reality of what is filmed over manipulation via editing), the long take, and deep composition.
  - 2) A conviction that the best films are a personal artistic expression and should bear a stamp of personal authorship, much as great works of literature bear the stamp of the writer. This latter tenet would be dubbed by American film critic Andrew Sarris the "auteur (author) theory." (Phillips.)
- Many traditional French cinema was rejected due to these principles, but both French and American directors that were conveying their personal signature in films would embraced.
- Some of the *Cahiers favorite* directors were Jean Vigo, Renoir, Alfred Hitchcock, and John Ford.



- Many film techniques sprang from the French New Wave. Not only from artistic factors, but due to low budget, time constraints, etc.
- Jump cuts, shooting on location, natural lighting, improvised dialogue and plotting, direct sound recording, and long takes, many could be found in French New Wave Films.
- These techniques were very new and useful in the 50s and 60s though it is common today.
- Jump cuts were used to cover mistakes as well as to be artistic.
- Majority agree that Claude Chabrol's *Le Beau Serge* was the first French New Wave film.
- Classic French cinema dealt with a strong narrative, while New Wave filmmakers made an audience confused with their disjointed scenes.
- A lot of contemporary filmmakers such as Tarantino and Wong Kar Wai, claim influence from the New Wave.

## Film Noir (*black film*)/ *Films policier*

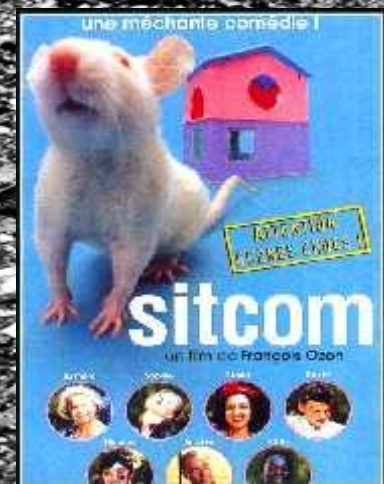
- ⦿ **t**he term film Noir was originally used to describe Hollywood movies by French critic, Frank Nino in 1946.
- ⦿ Noir Films developed from pulp literature and German cinema preceding the Great Depression.
- ⦿ Noir films often contained ambiguity, moral corruption, paranoia, etc.
- ⦿ The characters often consisted of heroes, villains, detectives, gangsters, murderers, and many more.
- ⦿ Storylines were non-linear, narratives were complex, often contained flashback sequences, and witty dialogue.
- ⦿ Females were either loving and trustworthy or they were femme fatales, which meant their roles were mysterious and seductive.
- ⦿ Typical settings would be dark alleyways, rain slicked streets, hotel rooms, and big cities. The hero is most likely always be male.

- Noir films had expressionistic lighting, depth of field camera work, disorienting visual schemes, ominous shadows, unusual camera angles, and moody compositions.
- Film Noir was mainly a term to describe American films.
- *Films policier* refers to the crime-thriller genre in French cinema. This genre developed in an attempt to emulate American *film noir*.
- Both share the same elements, style, and theme.
- Some directors of *film policier* include Henri-Georges Clouzot, Jacque Becker, Jean-Pierre Melville, and Jacque Deray.



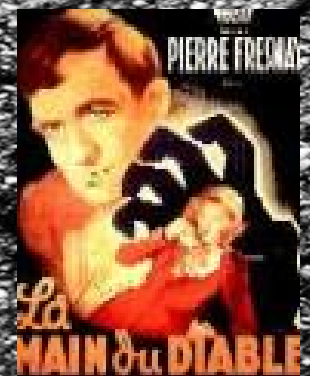
# Les Films Comiques (Comedies)

- ① **i**n France comedy has had a large standing in French cinema.
- ② Comic films seem to be the most popular in France today, achieving high returns than all other genres.
- ③ Most comedies appear from the saying that something always seems to go wrong.
- ④ The French do not like authority, therefore many people in uniform or a power suit is a often a target in comedies.
- ⑤ Many talented actors that work in comedic films came from the French music halls, such as Jacques Tati, Coluche, and Louis de Funès.
  - French comedy dominates foreign box office



## ♥ Fantasy/Science Fiction films

- **f**antasy/sci-fi films are under-represented in French cinema.
- The French audience preferred to watch films set in the 'real' world, therefore many directors did not think to make many fantasy/sci-fi films.
- Although a few film-makers have attempted and successfully created classic fantasy/sci-fi films.
- These films were most common in the 1920s, when directors were more daring and started to experiment with new ideas.
- Directors such as Abel Gance, Jean Epstein, and Marcel L'Herbier have contributed in this genre of film.
- In the 1940s, Jean Cocteau made two fantasy films that are regarded as classics, *La Belle et la bête* and *Orphée*.
- This genre has little appeal to the French because of the few films that have been made.



# DIRECTORS AND ACTORS

## 🍷 Jean Renoir (1894-1979)

- 🕒 Jean Renoir was the son of world-famous painter, Pierre-Auguste Renoir.
- 🕒 He was born in Paris, but raised in various cities and boarding schools of Southern France - living off of his father's financial success through painting.
- 🕒 He served in WWI and suffered a bullet wound in his leg. Watching Charlie Chaplain films sparked his interest in the cinema.
- 🕒 He tried to follow his father's suggestion to make ceramics, but later quit to explore cinema.
- 🕒 In 1924, Renoir directed the first of his nine silent films, most of which starred his first wife, Catherine Hessling, but the films did not pay out so he financed his future films by selling his father's films.
- 🕒 In the 1930's Renoir enjoyed great success from his films. In 1931 He directed his first sound films *On purge bébé* and *La Chienne*.



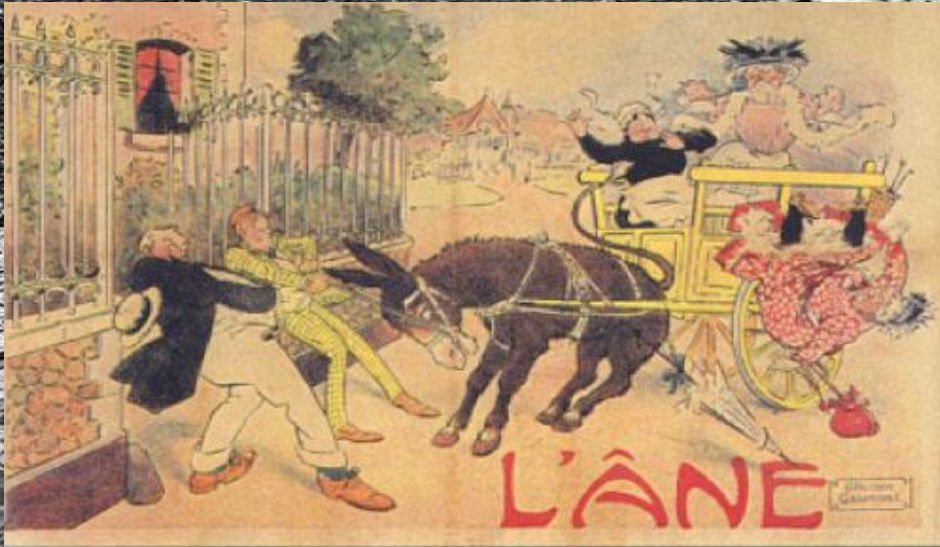
# Jean Renoir



## Alice Guy-Blaché (1873-1968)

- **A**lice Guy-Blaché was the first female director in the motion picture industry and considered to be one of the first directors of fairy tales and narrative stories.
- In 1894, she decided to join the Gaumont Film Company, which led to more than twenty-five year career of directing, producing, writing, and overseeing more than 700 films.
- In 1896, Alice Guy produced the first action film called *La Fée aux Choux* (The Cabbage Fairy.)
- She made about 300 movies, she created fairytales, fantasies, romances, comedies, myths, and religious parables throughout her career.
- In 1906 Alice filmed one of the first movies in color.
- During the early 1900s she directed hundreds of short sound movies using a tool called the chronophone which added sound.
- She used special effects, like using double exposure masking techniques and running a film backwards.

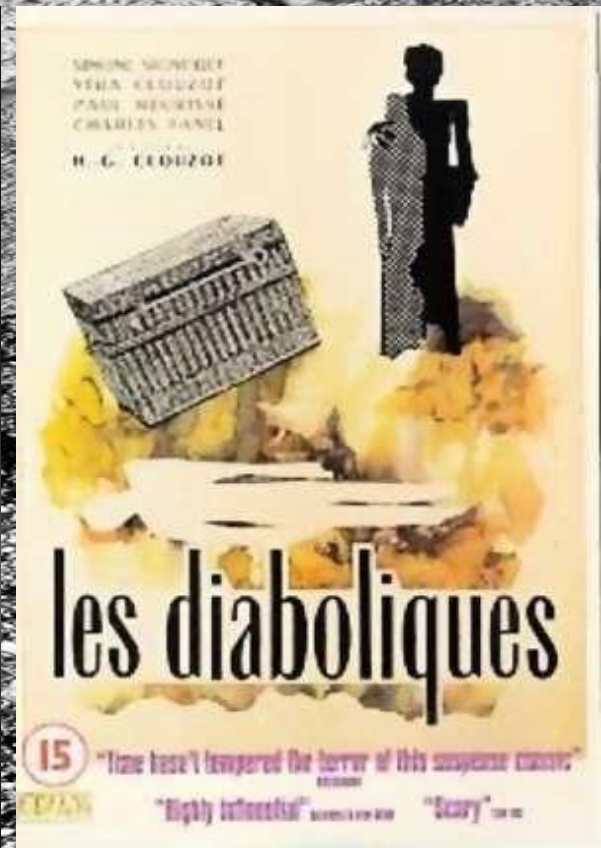
# Alice Guy-Blaché



## Simone Signoret (1921-1985)

- Simone Signoret was a Jewish French actress, she has won the Academy Award, Emmy, BAFTA, Césa, and Cannes.
- Signoret had developed an interest in acting and in 1942 she appeared in small parts and she earned enough to support her mother and two brothers because her was a French patriot and had fled the country
- She was type casted in seductive roles, often playing a prostitute. She appeared in many films during the 1950s, like *Thérèse Raquin*, *Les Diaboliques*, and *Les Diaboliques*.
- She became the first French actress and first woman to win the Academy Award for Best Actress with the film, *Room at the Top*.
- In later years, she was criticized for gaining weight and becoming less beautiful, but Signoret was never concerned with glamour and ignored the remarks.
- She continued acting until 1982, while she pursued a writing career.

# Simone Signoret



## 🍷 Gerard Depardieu (1948-present)

- 🍷 Gerard Depardieu is a prominent French actor that has been Academy Award nominated and has won a Golden Globe.
- 🍷 As a teen, Depardieu ran away from home, worked odd jobs, and went to jail for a short time due to theft.
- 🍷 A friend convinced Depardieu to audition for the Theatre Nationale Populaire in Paris and in the mid-1960s, he became a young actor playing roles that were not much different from his disreputable past.
- 🍷 Depardieu earned a Cannes Film Festival acting award and an Oscar nomination for *Cyrano de Bergerac* along with many numerous nominations he was an international star have many roles in both Europe and the United States.
- 🍷 In 2005, Depardieu announced his intention for retirement. He was appeared in 20 films since then, including 2007 films like *The Singer* and *La Vie en rose*. He is scheduled for more work in the next two years.

# Gerard Depardieu

