

MoMA CELEBRATES FOUR-DECADE CAREER OF SALLY POTTER WITH A TWO-WEEK RETROSPECTIVE OF HER DIVERSE, INDEPENDENT FILMS

Exhibition Includes the Premiere of Potter's Digitally Remastered Film, *Orlando* (1992), and Her Most Recent Feature, *RAGE* (2009)

Sally Potter

July 7–21, 2010

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters

NEW YORK, June 8, 2010—A retrospective of the films of British director Sally Potter (b. 1949) at The Museum of Modern Art from July 7 through 21, 2010, celebrates her distinct, independent vision, showing all her feature films, documentaries, and shorts, and a selection of her experimental works made between the early 1970s and the present. Potter has consistently kept a radical edge in her filmmaking work, beginning with avant-garde short films and moving on to alternative dramatic features that embrace music, literature, dance, theater, and performance. Potter typically works on multiple elements of her films, from script and direction to sound design, editing, performance, and production. Her films elegantly blend poetry and politics, giving voice to women's stories and romantic liaisons and exploring themes of desire and passion, self-expression, and the role of the individual in society. Considered together in this retrospective, Potter's films reveal the common thread of transformation that runs through her work—in terms both of her characters' journeys and her own ability to transcend genre and work with cutting-edge film forms. ***Sally Potter*** is organized by Sally Berger, Assistant Curator, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art.

The opening night, Wednesday, July 7, at 8:00 p.m., is the U.S. premiere of the digitally remastered, high-definition version of Potter's most critically acclaimed film, *Orlando* (1992), which will be re-released theatrically by Sony Pictures Classics on July 23. Based on Virginia Woolf's novel of the same name, the film stars Tilda Swinton as a young poet who is commanded by Queen Elizabeth to stay forever young, and lives for over four centuries first as a man, then as a woman. Potter and Swinton will participate in a conversation after the screening on July 7 at MoMA.

Potter's most recent movie, *RAGE* (2009), screening at MoMA on July 8 and 16, was first distributed on mobile applications before going to theaters when it was released in September 2009. The film continues Potter's groundbreaking forays into experimental narrative, with 14 actors (Judi Dench, Eddie Izzard, and Jude Law, among many other big names) playing characters persuaded to reveal their secrets into a schoolboy's cell phone at a New York fashion show. When an accident occurs on the catwalk, possible murder motives come to light. The film was nominated for Best Drama in the Fourteenth Annual Webby Awards.

The U.S. premiere of *Carmen* (2007) screens at MoMA on Saturday, July 10. The 170-minute split-screen film captures a modern-day production of Bizet's *Carmen*, directed by Potter for the English National Opera. It is made from a multicamera recording of one performance—both backstage and in front of house—which was originally webcast by the BBC.

Also featured in the exhibition are Potter's early short films, which experimented with ideas of "expanded cinema," incorporating projected films, split screens, and live performance. Her low-budget short *Thriller* (1979), which reverses Mimi's tragic death in *La Bohème*, achieved international cult status as a feminist critique of the romantic drama. *Thriller* was followed by her first feature, *The Gold Diggers* (1983), a hybrid drama set in a surreal landscape and starring Julie Christie, which symbolically explored the relationship between the female star and commercial cinema.

Press Contact: Meg Blackburn, (212) 708-9757, meg_blackburn@moma.org

For downloadable images, please visit www.moma.org/press.

No. 44

Public Information: The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

Hours: Films are screened Wednesday-Monday. For screening schedules, please visit www.moma.org.

Film Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only.) The price of a film ticket may be applied toward the price of a Museum admission ticket when a film ticket stub is presented at the Lobby Information Desk within 30 days of the date on the stub (does not apply during Target Free Friday Nights, 4:00–8:00 p.m.). Admission is free for Museum members and for Museum ticketholders.

The public may call (212) 708-9400 for detailed Museum information. Visit us at www.moma.org

Screening Schedule

Sally Potter
July 7–21, 2010

All films are written and directed by Potter and from Great Britain, unless otherwise indicated.

Wednesday, July 7

8:00 *Orlando*. 1992. Great Britain/Italy/France/The Netherlands. Based on the novel *Orlando, A Biography*, by Virginia Woolf. With Tilda Swinton, Billy Zane, Charlotte Valandrey, Heathcote Williams, Quentin Crisp.

Commanded by Queen Elizabeth to stay forever young, the youthful poet Orlando lives over four centuries first as a man, then as a woman, in this acclaimed adaptation of Woolf's classic novel, itself based on the life of Vita Sackville-West. 93 min.

U.S. premiere of digital version.

Followed by a discussion with Sally Potter and Tilda Swinton.

Thursday, July 8

4:30 *Thriller and Expanded Cinema Shorts:*

Jerk. 1969. With Mike Dunford, Hilary Dunford, Sally Potter, Susan Bocking.

Potter's first film and single-screen installation, featuring filmmaker Dunford, explores the relationship between camera and subject through gesture and camera manipulations. 2 min.

Play. 1970. Two cameras, one shooting in black-and-white, the other in color, film three pairs of twins from above. The two images are edited and projected side by side in this multiscreen exploration of play and ordinary movement. With new soundtrack by Potter and Fred Frith. 5 min. **World premiere.**

Combines. 1972. With Siobhan Davies.
A three-screen projection made for Richard Alston's Strider dance company, newly remastered and adapted for single-screen projection. 15 min. **World premiere.**

Thriller. 1979. With Colette Laffont, Rose English, Tony Gacon, Vincent Meehan.
This rewrite of Puccini's *La Bohème* deconstructs the Hollywood film and reverses the conventional tragic fate of the female romantic heroine. 32 min.

The London Story. 1986. In London's Whitehall district, three characters join together to expose a government's corrupt foreign policy. 15 min.

Program 69 min. **Introduced by Potter.**

8:00 RAGE. 2009. With Simon Abkarian, Patrick J. Adams, Riz Ahmed, Bob Balaban, Adriana Barraza, Steve Buscemi, Jakob Cedergren, Lily Cole, Judi Dench, Eddie Izzard, Jude Law, John Leguizamo, David Oyelowo, Dianne Wiest.
Fourteen actors play characters persuaded to reveal their secrets into a schoolboy's cell phone at a New York fashion show. When an accident occurs on the catwalk, possible murder motives come to light. 95 min. **Followed by a discussion with Potter.**

Friday, July 9

4:30 The Gold Diggers. 1983. With Julie Christie, Colette Laffont.
With her first feature, made immediately after *Thriller*, Potter continues to explore female stereotypes. She turns the tables on Busby Berkeley's musical *Gold Diggers of 1933* by associating her leading women with the alchemical equivalent of gold, with the men as the gold diggers. The film's Surrealist and sci-fi leaps in time are made palpable with lush cinematography, oversized sets, a bold score, and a subtly emotional performance by Christie. Panned by critics at the time of its release, the film nearly destroyed Potter's career, but this new digital remaster reveals an avant-garde classic. 85 min. **Followed by a discussion with Potter.**

8:00 YES. 2005. USA/Great Britain. With Joan Allen, Simon Abkarian, Sam Neill, Shirley Henderson.
Either unable or unwilling to come to terms with her deteriorating marriage, a married American woman, "She," turns to a Lebanese chef in London, "He." Their dramatically different backgrounds force them to confront the conflicts in their lives. The film's dialogue is intensified by its presentation in iambic pentameter. 100 min. **Followed by a discussion with Potter.**

Saturday, July 10

3:30 Carmen. 2007. In this modern-day production of Bizet's *Carmen*, directed by Potter for the English National Opera, José is a security guard observing scenes on security cameras, and Carmen is a prostitute. This film version, made from a multicamera recording of one performance—both backstage and in front of house—was broadcast as a split-screen webcast by the BBC. 170 min., with a brief intermission. **U.S. premiere.**

8:00 *The Man Who Cried*. 2000. Great Britain/France. With Christina Ricci, Cate Blanchett, Johnny Depp, John Turturro, Harry Dean Stanton.
A young girl's father leaves her behind to make his way from Russia to America in the 1920s. During an anti-Jewish pogrom, she is sent to live with a family in England, where she must adapt to a new culture. She sets off to make her own way in Paris and, through music and her friendships with a Russian dancer and a young gypsy leader, slowly rediscovers her Russian-Jewish identity against the background of the Nazi invasion. 96 min.

Sunday, July 11

3:30 *I Am an Ox, I Am a Horse, I Am a Man, I Am a Woman: Women in Russian Cinema*. 1990. This glasnost-era documentary, which incorporates footage from films from the 1920s through the 1980s, looks at the history of women in Russian cinema through the eyes of Russian women directors, actors, and scriptwriters. The film's title refers to a WWII slogan about women doing the work of absent men in the fields and at home. 60 min.

5:30 *The Tango Lesson*. 1997. Great Britain/France/Argentina/ Japan/Germany. With Sally Potter, Pablo Veron.
Potter plays herself in this story about a filmmaker who becomes enamored of the tango—and her dance instructor. Their relationship is fraught with tension, laying bare the power dynamics between dance instructor and film director, leader and follower. 97 min.

Monday, July 12

4:30 *Tears, Laughter, Fear, and Rage*. 1987. This documentary, originally screened as a four-part television program, features a variety of male and female directors, actors, and politicians reflecting on the idea of gendered emotions. The film pays special tribute to British director Michael Powell. 120 min.

Wednesday, July 14

7:00 *Thriller and Expanded Cinema Shorts*. (See Thursday, July 8, 4:30.)

Friday, July 16

4:00 *RAGE*. (See Thursday, July 8, 8:00.)

Saturday, July 17

3:30 *Carmen*. (See Saturday, July 10, 3:30.)

7:30 *The Gold Diggers*. (See Friday, July 9, 4:30.)

Sunday, July 18

2:00 *YES*. (See Friday, July 9, 8:00.)

5:00 *The Tango Lesson*. (See Sunday, July 11, 5:30.)

Monday, July 19

7:00 *The Man Who Cried*. (See Saturday, July 10, 8:00.)

Wednesday, July 21

5:00 *I Am an Ox, I Am a Horse, I Am a Man, I Am a Woman: Women in Russian Cinema.* (See Sunday, July 11, 3:30.)

7:00 *Tears, Laughter, Fear, and Rage.* (See Monday, July 12, 4:30.)