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News Release

BAMcinématek presents *HAWKS*, September 15–30

Sixteen-film retrospective of director Howard Hawks features genre classics and rare films including *Scarface* (1932), *Ball of Fire* (1947), *The Big Sleep* (1946), *The Big Sky* (1952), *The Road to Glory* (1936), and *Tiger Shark* (1932)

BAM Rose Cinemas (30 Lafayette Ave.)
Tickets: \$11 per screening for adults; \$7.50 for seniors 65 and over,
children under twelve, and \$7.50 for students 25 and under with valid I.D.
Monday–Thursday, except holidays; \$7 BAM Cinema Club members
Tickets available by phone at 718.777.FILM
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Brooklyn, August 15, 2008—From September 15–30 BAMcinématek, the repertory film program at BAM Rose Cinemas, presents *HAWKS*, a retrospective of sixteen films directed by Howard Hawks. For more than a half-century, Hawks influenced every major film genre—war, musical, western, biopic, melodrama—when he wasn't defining one—as he did with prototypical screwball comedy *Twentieth Century*, or quintessential gangster pic *Scarface*. A former race car driver and aviator in WWI, he started in the props department and worked his way up the ranks to director, where he was known as the consummate professional. Hawks' films share a consistently flawless visual style, well-written stories, and themes of comradeship, morality, and courage, while his pairing of charismatic male leads like Cary Grant and Humphrey Bogart with strong women such as Katharine Hepburn and Lauren Bacall make for some of the most entertaining movies of the classical era.

The series kicks off on September 15 with *Twentieth Century* (1934). Hawks' definitive screwball comedy about a Broadway producer (John Barrymore) who tries to coax a starlet (Carole Lombard) back from Hollywood features a script by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur adapted from their Broadway play. "Mr. Barrymore acts with such imagination and zest that he never fails to keep the picture thoroughly alive," says The New York Times. Next on September 16 is prison drama *The Criminal Code* (1931), featuring Walter Huston as a district attorney-turned-prison-warden who comes face to face with criminals he put away. "Hawks' later concerns are in full bloom here..." notes Time Out London, "and his totally assured style is reflected in the quick, naturalistic dialogue, quirky black humour, and the ability to turn potentially risible set pieces—like Huston's first confrontation with a yard full of riotous cons—into electrifying suspense."

BAMRose Cinemas

more...

Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall star in their legendary first film together, *To Have and Have Not* (1944), on September 17. Set in wartime Martinique and adapted by William Faulkner and Jules Furthman from an Ernest Hemingway novel, the film focuses on the owner of a charter boat (Bogart). He reluctantly becomes involved in a plan to smuggle a Resistance leader out of the country while falling for an American expat (Bacall, in her screen debut). “An unassuming masterpiece...,” writes [Time Out London](#), “[and] Hawks’ toughest statement on the necessity of accepting responsibility for others or forfeiting one’s self-respect—the sum total of morality for Hawks—and the perfect bridge from the free and open world of *Only Angels Have Wings* to the claustrophobic one of *Rio Bravo*.”

[Time Out London](#) calls *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), screening on September 18, “[o]ne of the finest screwball comedies ever.” This classic features Cary Grant as a paleontologist opposite Katharine Hepburn’s heiress, the owner of a pet leopard used to try and snag the academic with hilarious results. [All Movie Guide](#) describes *Bringing Up Baby* as “a funny, fast-paced, and offbeat story, enlivened by animated performances from the two leads.” Paul Muni stars as Chicago mobster Tony Camonte on September 19 in 1932’s influential *Scarface*, scripted by Ben Hecht and loosely based on the life of Al Capone, who was nicknamed “Scarface.” The film was completed in 1930 prior to key gangster pictures *Little Caesar* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1930) and *Public Enemy* (William Wellman, 1931), but it was not released until producer Howard Hughes had cut some of the violence, re-shot and added scenes, and re-titled the film “*Scarface: Shame of the Nation*” in order to satisfy censors at the Hays Office. [Time Out London](#) remarks, “Its seminal importance in the early gangster movie cycle [is] outweighed only by its still exhilarating brilliance.”

In Hawks’ *His Girl Friday* (1942)—a remake of *The Front Page* (Lewis Milestone, 1931)—Cary Grant’s newspaper editor orchestrates outrageous plans to prevent his star reporter/ex-wife from marrying an insurance salesman and leaving the job. The film, written by Charles Lederer and based on a play by Hecht and MacArthur, screens on September 20. Another memorable Hawks’ screwball comedy follows on September 21: *Ball of Fire* (1947). Gary Cooper stars as a professor who hides Barbara Stanwyck’s nightclub singer on the lam from her gangster fiancé in the house shared by his linguist colleagues. [Time Out London](#) praises Stanwyck’s “marvelous performance” and describes *Ball of Fire* as “pure joy.”

A special double bill on September 23 allows ticket holders to see two rare Hawks films from the 30s for the price of one. Featuring a script by William Faulkner, Hawks, and others, *The Road to Glory* (1936) stars Frederic March and Lionel Barrymore as army officers in WWI. “[A] grim, taut and absorbing war film,” writes [The New York Times](#). The film is followed by *Tiger Shark* (1932) which features Edward G. Robinson as an immigrant fisherman involved in a love triangle when his wife leaves him for the friend whose life he saved. “One of the best of Hawks’ early dramas and remarkable for its detailed portrait of a small fishing community,” notes [Channel 4 Film](#).

A Song Is Born (1948) is next on September 24, in which Hawks remakes *Ball of Fire* in the jazz world. Virginia Mayo plays a nightclub singer who falls in with a group of musicologists led by Danny Kaye, in a film full of cameos by Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman, and others. In the comedy *I Was a Male War Bride* (1949), screening September 25, Cary Grant plays a French army captain who marries an American lieutenant (Ann Sheridan) only to have their bridal suite invaded with news of the war’s end. Zaniness ensues as Grant dresses in drag in a typical Hawksian reversal of gender roles in order to get back to the States and his wife. “Neatly reversing the usual comic model, where marriage only ever signals ‘The End’,” says [Time Out London](#), “this is a classic demonstration of Hawks’ unsentimental optimism, and a comedy on frustration and sex-roles that is romantic, subversive and extremely funny, all at the same time.”

Grant leads the cast again as a pilot in the poignant drama *Only Angels Have Wings* on September 26 (1939), featuring some of the most stunning aerial photography in Hawks’ oeuvre. In the screenplay by Hawks and Jules Furthman, Grant’s character copes with a colleague’s death at the same time as a new love interest and an old lover enter the picture. [Slant Magazine](#) calls *Only Angels Have Wings* “a bizarre and gorgeous film.” Hawks’ classic *The Big Sleep* (1946), described as “a film noir touchstone” by [The Washington Post](#), follows on September 27. Humphrey Bogart gives an iconic turn as private eye Philip Marlowe opposite Lauren Bacall in

this adaptation of Raymond Chandler's novel from a script by William Faulkner, Jules Furthman, and Leigh Brackett.

In the delirious comedy *Monkey Business* (1952) on September 28, a test monkey slips a fountain-of-youth elixir into a water cooler causing professor Cary Grant and his wife, played by Ginger Rogers, to take on mindsets half their age. The smoldering Marilyn Monroe charms the stodgy academic while monkeys run wild in a film much beloved by Jacques Rivette, among others. "The evidence onscreen is the proof of Mr. Hawks' genius," writes Rivette in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, "You only have to watch *Monkey Business* to know that is a brilliant film."

The Big Sky (1952), a Western featuring Kirk Douglas as a wilderness trader racing up the Missouri River, is next on September 29. *The New York Times* notes, "The majestic sweep of rivers, mountains, passes and woods of Grand Teton National Park is a sight to behold and a tribute to photography." The series concludes on September 30 with Hawks' biopic *Sergeant York* (1941), which was the top-grossing film of 1941. Gary Cooper was Oscar-nominated for his role as one of WWI's most decorated soldiers. "[F]ilm biography at its best," remarks *Variety* about *Sergeant York*. "For Gary Cooper the role is made to order."

BAM Rose Cinemas "offers one of the most civilized movie-going experiences in the city," according to *The New York Times*. General admission tickets to BAM Rose Cinemas are \$11. Tickets are \$7.50 for seniors over 65 and children under twelve. Tickets are \$7.50 for students 25 and under with valid I.D. Monday–Thursday, except holidays, and \$7 for BAM Cinema Club members. Discounts are only available at BAM Rose Cinemas box office. Tickets are also available by phone at 718.777.FILM, or online at BAM.org. For more information, call the BAMcinématek hotline at 718.636.4100 or visit BAM.org.

HAWKS schedule

All films directed by Howard Hawks.

Monday, September 15 at 6:50, 9:15pm

Twentieth Century (1934), 91min

With John Barrymore, Carole Lombard

Hawks' first screwball comedy sizzles with his trademark rapid-fire banter, as an egomaniacal Broadway producer (Barrymore) struggles to lure his former pet starlet (Lombard) back from Hollywood. Hawks notoriously coaxed a fiery performance from the difficult Lombard, giving the production an intriguing art-imitates-life element. Barrymore considered his "a role that comes along once in a lifetime," and his acid-tongued hamminess steals the show.

Tuesday, September 16 at 6:50, 9:15pm

The Criminal Code (1931), 97min

With Walter Huston, Boris Karloff

A district attorney turned prison warden (Brady) must come face-to-face with many of the men he's sentenced, while his favored inmate (Graham) wrestles with the decision to squeal on a cellblock murderer. This pre-*Scarface* potboiler, Hawks' second talkie, is rife with moral upheavals, dubious convictions, and jailhouse grit. Karloff has a memorable stint as the ominous prison barber, pre-dating his Universal horror hits.

Wednesday, September 17 at 4:30, 6:50, 9:15pm

To Have and Have Not (1944), 100min

With Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall

"*You know how to whistle, don't you, Steve? You just put your lips together and... blow.*" Bogart and the 19-year-old Bacall (in her first film role) fell in love while shooting this iconic wartime Hemingway adaptation, and their red-hot chemistry crackles throughout the *Casablanca*-esque tale of a cynical expat's reluctant Resistance efforts in Martinique. Hawks audaciously told Hemingway his book was "a bunch of junk," and (together with Hemingway rival William Faulkner) re-tooled the script into a now-classic yarn.

Thursday, September 18 at 6:50, 9:15pm

Bringing Up Baby (1938), 102min

With Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn

A meek paleontologist (Grant), a loudmouthed socialite (Hepburn), a domesticated leopard, and a missing dinosaur bone all collide in this beloved screwball classic. *Baby*'s perfect balance of slapstick, spectacle, lighting-quick wit, and overlapping dialogue is a virtual course in Classical Hollywood style. *Bringing Up Baby* "benefits from the swift Hawks pacing and the charm of its two leads," writes [Slant Magazine](#).

Friday, September 19 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, 9:15pm

Scarface (1932), 93min

With Paul Muni, George Raft

Long before Pacino, Muni was the original pug-faced gangster—"The Shame of the Nation"—in this legendary, Howard Hughes-financed pulp knockout. Hawks' favorite of his films overflows with enough violence (over 30 deaths!), surliness, and criminal glorification to send the censors into a fury. The pitch-perfect mobster lingo, biting cynicism, and neo-Shakespearean tragedy all culminate in a show-stopping shootout finale.

Saturday, September 20 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, 9:15pm

His Girl Friday (1940), 92min

With Cary Grant, Rosalind Russell

The pinnacle of the screwball genre, *His Girl Friday* features prototypical "Hawksian woman" Hildy Johnson (Russell) as an ambitious, acerbic, and wildly energetic newspaperwoman in a man's world. Hildy runs circles around her harried ex-husband/boss (Grant) on her way to writing one last big story before kissing the biz (and Grant) goodbye and re-marrying. Hawks' pace was never more blistering: the newsroom chatter moves so fast, there's not even time for a musical score.

Sunday, September 21 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, 9:15pm

Ball of Fire (1947), 111min

With Barbara Stanwyck, Gary Cooper

A cheeky take on *Snow White*, a gaggle of graying professors' lives are flipped upside-down when their junior colleague (Cooper) brings home burlesque dancer Sugarpudding O'Shea (Stanwyck) for a little "linguistic research." Little do they know, she's on the run from her gangster fiancé! Stanwyck's cacophony of period jive is a total blast: "yum-yum," "scrow, scam, scraw," and "root, zoot, cute, and solid to boot" are just some of the gems that pop up in Billy Wilder's script.

Tuesday, Sep 23 at 7pm

The Road to Glory with ***Tiger Shark***, 180min total

The Road to Glory (1936), 77min

With Fredric March, Lionel Barrymore

William Faulkner (in his second of six Hawks collaborations) co-scripted this elegantly realized tragedy of the World War I trenches—a remake of Raymond Bernard's French sensation *Wooden Crosses*. When a young lieutenant (March) secretly falls for his captain's mistress, he struggles to prove his military loyalty amid the bewildering German bombardment. An under-recognized antiwar classic, featuring gorgeous battlefield photography by *Citizen Kane*'s Gregg Toland. [The New York Times](#) comments, "The work of the cast is faultless."

With ***Tiger Shark*** (1932), 103min

With Edward G. Robinson

This rarely-screened early talkie features an archetypal love triangle that inspired countless remakes: after losing an arm while rescuing a friend, an immigrant fisherman (Robinson) fights to stay afloat when his wife leaves him for the man he saved. The exquisite, documentary-style fishing sequences highlight Hawks' longstanding fascination with the workingman's process. "*Tiger Shark* was remade several times 'unofficially' by Warners, but this remains the definitive version, with its hard-edged, almost documentary style and monumental performances," remarks [Channel 4 Film](#).

Wednesday, September 24 at 4:30, 6:50, 9:15pm

A Song Is Born (1948), 113min

With Danny Kaye, Virginia Mayo

Hawks remakes his own *Ball of Fire* with a jazz twist: this time it's nightclub singer Honey Swanson (Mayo) stirring up a gang of musicologists (led by the affable Kaye). Featuring a veritable who's-who of the 40's Big Band scene, with unforgettable cameos by Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Lionel Hampton, and others!

Thursday, September 25 at 4:30, 6:50, 9:15pm

I Was a Male War Bride (1949), 105min

With Cary Grant, Ann Sheridan

A languid post-war farce, oozing with Hawks' usual sexual frustration: gender-bending hijinks ensue when bumbling French Captain Henri Rochard (Grant) weds an American lieutenant (Sheridan), only to have their marital bedroom abruptly invaded by news of the war's end. With his wife shipped back to the States, Rochard must emasculate himself in order to dodge the military bureaucracy, declaring himself a "war bride" and—in a classic finale—dressing in drag in a harried attempt to consummate their marriage.

Friday, September 26 at 3, 6, 9pm

Only Angels Have Wings (1939), 121min

With Cary Grant, Rita Hayworth, Jean Arthur

Perhaps Hawks' most poignant film: a stolid airmail pilot (Grant), holed up in a ramshackle Ecuadorean port, must grapple with a colleague's death, an enchanting singer's (Arthur) arrival, and a former lover's untimely reappearance, all while navigating the stormy South American skies. The film features stunning aerial sequences drawn from Hawks' personal experiences as a pilot. *Variety* comments, "In *Only Angels Have Wings*, Howard Hawks had a story to tell and he has done it inspiringly well."

Saturday, September 27 at 2, 4:30, 6:50pm

The Big Sleep (1946), 114min

With Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall

Chandler, Hawks, Bogey, Bacall: it doesn't get any better than this. Hawks' only true noir remains an absolute genre classic, with a labyrinthine plot so convoluted that, famously, neither director nor author could determine who killed who. Nitpicking such details seems futile, anyway, while trying to keep up with the steamy badinage of Hollywood's greatest real-life couple. "It's unusual to find yourself laughing in a movie not because something is funny but because it's so wickedly clever," comments Roger Ebert in [Chicago Sun Times](#).

Sunday, September 28 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, 9:15pm

Monkey Business (1952) 97min

With Cary Grant, Ginger Rogers, Marilyn Monroe

Bringing Up Baby looms large in this outrageous fantasy of simian sidekicks, absent-minded professors, and madcap slapstick. When a test monkey slips a fountain-of-youth elixir into a water cooler, a stodgy scientist (Grant) and his wife (Rodgers) begin to act half their age. Monroe is typically titillating as a young secretary enticing Grant to sow his wild oats, putting his marriage on the rocks. Jacques Rivette was so inspired by the film, he launched a Hawks revival with his seminal essay "The Genius of Howard Hawks."

Monday, September 29 at 6, 9pm

The Big Sky (1952), 140min

With Kirk Douglas

Douglas excels, in his only Hawks collaboration, as an underdog wilderness trader racing 2000 miles up the Missouri River to oust his monopolizing competitors. Hawks' affinity for nicknames shines through, as Frenchy, Poordevil, Boone, Zeb, Streak, and Teal Eye all play important roles. Upon viewing the film, Eric Rohmer gushed that "if one does not love the films of Howard Hawks, one cannot love cinema." Features lush Oscar-nominated cinematography from longtime Hawks lenser Russell Harlan.

Tuesday, September 30 at 6, 9pm

Sergeant York (1941), 134min

With Gary Cooper, Walter Brennan

Hawks, himself a World War I veteran, earned his lone Oscar nomination—and his greatest box office success—for this jingoist biopic of the Great War’s most decorated soldier. Cooper was handpicked by the real-life York and delivers one of his best performances as the “aw shucks” hillbilly turned hero, while Hawks staple Brennan has a memorable turn as a down-home preacher. Cooper went on to win the Oscar, and later declared *York* his favorite of his own films.

About Howard Hawks

Howard Hawks (born in 1896 in Goshen, Indiana) was one of the most significant directors of the Classical Hollywood era and the accomplished director of more than 40 feature films. Known as the consummate professional and a versatile craftsman, Hawks maintained a degree of control over his films which was rare within the Hollywood system. He achieved this by being involved in many aspects of production, including casting, scriptwriting, and producing, as well as by working independently on projects for different studios instead of under long-term studio contracts. He contributed important films to every major American genre, from crime films and Westerns to comedies and war films. The level of autonomy Hawks retained, as well as the artistic and thematic unity he achieved across popular films in a range of genres, was widely praised by the critics at Cahiers du Cinéma, notably in Jacques Rivette’s 1953 article “The Genius of Howard Hawks,” with the director’s oeuvre held up as a textbook example of *la politique des auteurs*. Hawks influenced the work of directors such as Jean-Luc Godard, François Truffaut, Robert Altman, John Carpenter, Peter Bogdanovich, and Walter Hill. Hawks worked with many of the key actors of the classical era, including Humphrey Bogart, Katharine Hepburn, Barbara Stanwyck, Gary Cooper, John Wayne, and Cary Grant, while his talent for casting gave future stars such as Lauren Bacall, Carole Lombard, Paul Muni, and Montgomery Clift their breakout roles.

Hawks’ family moved to Wisconsin when he was a child, and later, to California. He studied mechanical engineering at Cornell University—while working at Famous Players-Lasky during the summers—and he joined the U.S. Army Air Service as a pilot during WWI. As a young man he held various other jobs and enjoyed racing cars and flying planes before moving back to California to pursue a career in cinema. He started out in the props department of the Mary Pickford Company in 1919. In the early 20s he continued to move up the ranks there, working as an editor, screenwriter, and assistant director before being hired as a contract director by Fox Film Corporation, where he made several silent films. His first full talking picture was the war film *The Dawn Patrol* in 1930, which he followed with the prison drama *The Criminal Code* (1931) and *The Crowd Roars* (1932), a film about car racing. Hawks’ first important work of this period was 1932’s *Scarface*, a gangster film produced by Howard Hughes for United Artists. The film was held back from distribution while Hughes fought with the Hays Office over cuts to violent and “immoral” scenes, only finding release two years later in a censored form with newly-shot sequences and other changes.

Subsequent pictures of the 30s and 40s include a number of screwball comedies (a genre Hawks essentially invented)—*Twentieth Century* (1934), *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), *Ball of Fire* (1947), *His Girl Friday* (1940), *I Was a Male War Bride* (1949), and *Monkey Business* (1952)—the war films *The Road to Glory* (1936), *Sergeant York* (1941), and *Air Force* (1943); as well as essential film noir *The Big Sleep* (1946), and epic Western *Red River* (1948). Later films include *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), *The Big Sky* (1952), *Hatari* (1962), *Rio Bravo* (1959), and *El Dorado* (1967). Hawks was nominated for the Best Director Academy Award for *Sergeant York* and received an honorary Oscar in 1974. He died in 1977 in Palm Springs, California.

Credits

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General Information

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, BAMcafé, and Brownstone Books at BAM are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn. BAM Harvey Theater is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). BAM Rose Cinemas is Brooklyn's only movie house dedicated to first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming. BAMcafé, operated by Great Performances, is open for dining prior to Howard Gilman Opera House performances. BAMcafé also features an eclectic mix of spoken word and live music for BAMcafé Live nights on Friday and Saturday with a special BAMcafé Live menu available starting at 8pm.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue;
D, M, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue
Train: Long Island Railroad to Flatbush Avenue
Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM
Car: Commercial parking lots are located adjacent to BAM

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