



BAM presents *Women at Work: The Domestic Is Not Free*, Nov 2—10, spotlighting the ways women have created, challenged, and subverted domesticity

October 9, 2018/Brooklyn, NY—From Friday, November 2 through Saturday, November 10 BAM presents *Women at Work: The Domestic Is Not Free*, a wide-ranging series spotlighting the overlooked work women take on in the home as house-workers, caretakers, and familial partners. *The Domestic Is Not Free* is the third edition of the ongoing *Women at Work* series—following *Women at Work: Labor Activism* in March and *Women at Work: Radical Creativity* in August—and highlights the historically erased and undervalued physical and emotional labor women perform, often invisibly, every day. The series considers the myriad ways in which women around the world have challenged and subverted traditional associations between gender and domesticity. Exploring the intersections of labor, race, class, and social environment, these films embody human stories of sacrifice and endurance. BAM Cinema Department Coordinator and programmer of the series Natalie Erazo explains, “I learned early on to value the domestic space and appreciate the women around me who shaped it. I hope this series will encourage viewers to acknowledge the monotony and emotional bearing of a life often relegated to being behind the scenes.”

The series opens with Ousmane Sembène’s seminal *Black Girl* (1966—Nov 2). Screening with short films *Fannie’s Film* (Woods, 1979) and *Fucked Like a Star* (Saintonge, 2018), these films depict black women in roles of domestic service while also giving audiences access to their inner thoughts, feelings, and struggles. Films that also look at the emotional labor of caretaking include the recent Brazilian film *Good Manners* (Rojas & Dutra, 2017—Nov 9), which digs into the relationship between a wealthy, white mother-to-be and the working class black woman she hires to be the nanny to her unborn child. The main character of Claudia Llosa’s *The Milk of Sorrow* (2009—Nov 3) takes on both the emotional labor of caring for her elderly mother while dealing with her family’s inherited traumas.

The Domestic Is Not Free also considers domestic labor in terms of community building and the creation of safe spaces outside of traditional domestic spheres. Wu Tsang’s *Wildness* (2012—Nov 10) chronicles the Los Angeles bar Silver Platter, which served as a safe haven for Latinx queer and transgender communities. Cláudia Varejão’s documentary *Ama-San* (2016—Nov 4) explores the close-knit community of women who carry on the ancient Japanese tradition of *ama*, diving for pearls and abalone.

The series also includes films about rejecting the societal constraints placed upon women. Satyajit Ray’s *Mahanagar* (1963—Nov 5) depicts changing social customs in 1950s India as a Kolkata housewife defies her husband and begins working as a saleswoman to help support her family. Marziyeh Meshkini’s *The Day I Became a Woman* (2000—Nov 4) chronicles three women at different stages of womanhood as each challenges the restrictions Iranian society places on them. *The Day I Became a Woman* screens with *Woman of a Thousand Fires/Mujer de Milfuegos* (1976), Chick Strand’s short film documenting the lives and domestic rituals of women in Spain, Greece, and Mexico.

The subversion of the domestic worker stereotype is considered in the shorts program entitled *Daydream Therapy*, which includes *Lip* (Moffat, 1999—Nov 6), *The Maids* (Jackson, 1985), and *Daydream Therapy* (Nicolas, 1977). A series on domestic labor would not be complete without Chantal Akerman’s *Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975—Nov 3), screening with Martha Rosler’s *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975), as well as Todd Haynes’ *Safe* (1995—Nov 3).

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Women at Work: The Domestic Is Not Free Schedule:

Fri, Nov 2

7pm: *Black Girl* + *Fannie's Film* + *Fucked Like a Star*

Sat, Nov 3

2pm: *The Milk of Sorrow (La Teta Asustada)*

4pm: *Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* + *Semiotics of the Kitchen*

8:30pm: *Safe*

Sun, Nov 4

3pm: *The Day I Became a Woman* + *Woman of a Thousand Fires (Mujer de Milfuegos)*

5pm: *Ama-San*

Mon, Nov 5

7pm: *Mahanagar (The Big City)*

Tue, Nov 6

7pm: *Daydream Therapy: Shorts Program*

Fri, Nov 9

7pm: *Good Manners*

Sat, Nov 10

7pm: *Wildness*

Film Descriptions

AMA-SAN (2016) *Dir. Cláudia Varejão*. This dreamy documentary spotlights the ancient Japanese tradition of the *ama*—“sea women” who carry on the age-old practice of diving for pearls and abalone just as their ancestors did, without air tanks or modern scuba gear. In a rush of gorgeous, mysterious images, Portuguese director Cláudia Varejão captures the rituals and rhythms of a close-knit community of women who keep the past alive even as modernity encroaches. *113min.* Sun, Nov 4 at 5pm

BLACK GIRL (1966) *Dir. Ousmane Sembene. With Mbissine Thérèse Diop, Anne-Marie Jelinek, Robert Fontaine*. Ousmane Sembène's landmark feature debut follows the fortunes of Diouana, a Senegalese housemaid brought to France by the white family she works for. Once there, she finds herself isolated and trapped in a life of domestic servitude—a situation the dignified Diouana refuses to accept. The first African film to receive international acclaim is one of the most trenchant films ever made about race and a devastating indictment of colonialism's legacy. *DCP. 80min.* Fri, Nov 2 at 7pm
*Screening with *Fannie's Film* and *Fucked Like a Star*

THE DAY I BECAME A WOMAN (2000) *Dir. Marziyeh Meshkini. With Shabnam Tolouei, Fatemeh Cherag Akhar, Azizeh Sedighi*. The stories of three women—a girl anxiously facing the responsibilities of adulthood; a wife fleeing her husband; and a widow at last able to enjoy life on her own terms—illuminate the challenges faced by women in Iranian society. Initially banned in Iran, Marziyeh Meshkini's remarkable debut (co-written with her husband Mohsen Makhmalbaf) is a stirring poetic depiction of women searching for freedom. *35mm. 80min.* Sun, Nov 4 at 3pm
*Screening with *Woman of a Thousand Fires*

DAYDREAM THERAPY: SHORTS PROGRAM

LIP (1999) *Dir. Tracey Moffatt*. Artist Tracey Moffatt spotlights scene-stealing moments from under-recognized black actresses throughout Hollywood history in the role most commonly afforded them: the maid. *10min.* + **THE MAIDS** (1985) *Dir. Muriel Jackson*. This incisive documentary explores the complex, entwined histories of domestic labor and African-American women's struggle for liberation. *28min.* + **DAYDREAM THERAPY** (1977) *Dir. Bernard Nicolas*. Set to the music of Nina Simone, this bracing LA

Rebellion short evokes the inner life of a black hotel maid who counters the indignities she suffers at work through empowering fantasy. *8min.* Tue, Nov 6 at 7pm

FANNIE'S FILM (1979) *Dir. Fronza Woods.* As a cleaning woman goes about her job, voiceover narration makes us privy to inner thoughts, hopes, and feelings—a quietly revolutionary challenge to received stereotypes about women of color who earn their living as domestic workers. *Digital. 15min.* Fri, Nov 2 at 7pm

*Screening with *Black Girl*

FUCKED LIKE A STAR (2018) *Dir. Stefani Saintonge.* The words of Toni Morrison are set to a poetic meditation on women's work and the dreamlife of ants. *8min.* Fri, Nov 2 at 7pm

*Screening with *Black Girl.*

*Stefani Saintonge will be present.

GOOD MANNERS (2017) *Dir. Juliana Rojas & Marco Dutra.* With *Isabél Zuaa, Marjorie Estiano, Miguel Lobo.* This brilliantly original Brazilian genre-bender is a deliciously dark, lushly stylized modern-day fairy tale of class, race, sexuality...and werewolves. In São Paulo, a wealthy white mother-to-be hires a working-class black woman to be the live-in nanny for her unborn child—a fraught relationship that quickly goes from carnal to monstrous. *DCP. 125min.* Fri, Nov 9 at 7pm

JEANNE DIELMAN, 23, QUAI DU COMMERCE, 1080 BRUXELLES (1975) *Dir. Chantal Akerman.* With *Delphine Seyrig, Jan Decorte, Henri Storck.* Three days in the life of a Belgian single mother: in near-real time, we watch as the title character peels potatoes, runs errands, and entertains the occasional gentleman caller—all leading up to one of cinema's most startling denouements. Chantal Akerman's slow-burn epic is nothing less than "the first masterpiece of the feminine in the history of the cinema" (*The New York Times*). *DCP. 225min.* Sat, Nov 3 at 4pm

*Screening with *Semiotics of the Kitchen*

MAHANAGAR (THE BIG CITY) (1963) *Dir. Satyajit Ray.* With *Madhabi Mukherjee, Anil Chatterjee, Haradhan Bannerjee.* One of master director Satyajit Ray's finest works explores changing social customs in 1950s India as a Kolkata housewife—despite the protestations of her traditionalist husband—takes a job as a saleswoman to help support the family. With wry humor and an unwavering humanist spirit, *Mahanagar* vividly portrays how the forces of class, capitalism, and tradition shape women's lives. *35mm. 136min.* Mon, Nov 5 at 7pm

THE MILK OF SORROW (LA TETA ASUSTADA) (2009) *Dir. Claudia Llosa.* With *Magaly Solier, Susi Sánchez, Efraín Solís.* The ghosts of Peru's past continue to haunt the present in Claudia Llosa's hypnotic, magical realist fable. Believing she has inherited—through breast milk—the traumas endured by her mother during the 1980s civil war, a young indigenous woman must confront deep-seated psychic scars as she finds her way forward. Winner of the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival, this gorgeously lensed parable is a haunting portrait of a woman and a country in the process of healing. *35mm. 95min.* Sat, Nov 3 at 2pm

SAFE (1995) *Dir. Todd Haynes.* With *Julianne Moore, Peter Friedman, Xander Berkeley.* Todd Haynes' all-American nightmare stars Julianne Moore as a California housewife whose picture-perfect life breaks down when she develops "20th Century Disease," a mysterious chemical allergy to seemingly all aspects of modern existence. A dark satire of 1980s SoCal suburbia suffused with a creeping existential horror, *Safe* remains a deeply resonant and unsettling experience. *35mm. 119min.* Sat, Nov 3 at 8:30pm

SEMIOTICS OF THE KITCHEN (1975) *Martha Rosler.* Martha Rosler stages a feminist revolt in the kitchen in this savagely parodic anti-cooking instructional. *6min.* Sat, Nov 3 at 4pm

*Screening with *Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*

WILDNESS (2012) *Dir. Wu Tsang.* Wu Tsang's colorfully imaginative documentary chronicles the life, death, and afterlife of the Silver Platter, a Los Angeles bar that for decades was a haven for Latinx queer and transgender communities—until a weekly party began attracting a new crowd of young artists. Using

audio from the bar's patrons as narration, *Wildness* is a heady, thought-provoking consideration of safe spaces— their meaning, necessity, and fragility. *75min.* Sat, Nov 10 at 7pm

***WOMAN OF A THOUSAND FIRES* (1976) Dir. Chick Strand.** Avant-grade trailblazer Chick Strand journeys from Spain to Greece to Mexico to document the lives and domestic rituals of women in this surrealist blend of documentary and fantasy. *15min.* Sun, Nov 4 at 3pm
*Screening with *The Day I Became a Woman*

About BAM Cinema

Since 1998 BAM Rose Cinemas has been Brooklyn's home for alternative, documentary, art-house, and independent films. Combining new releases with year-round repertory program, the four-screen venue hosts new and rarely seen contemporary films, classics, work by local artists, and festivals of films from around the world, often with special appearances by directors, actors, and other guests. BAM has hosted major retrospectives of filmmakers like Spike Lee, Chantal Akerman, John Carpenter, Manoel de Oliveira, Luis Buñuel, King Hu, and Vincente Minnelli (winning a National Film Critics' Circle Award prize for the retrospective), and hosted the first US retrospectives of directors Arnaud Desplechin, Hong Sang-soo, Andrzej Zulawski, and Jiang Wen. Since 2009 the program has also produced BAMcinemaFest, New York's home for American independent film, and has championed the work of filmmakers like Janicza Bravo, Andrew Dosunmu, Lena Dunham, and Alex Ross Perry. The 12-day festival of New York premieres, now in its tenth year, ran from June 20—July 1, 2018.

Credits

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General Information:

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé 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). Both locations house Greenlight Bookstore at BAM kiosks. BAM Fisher, located at 321 Ashland Place, is the newest addition to the BAM campus and houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio. 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, offers varied light fare and bar service prior to BAM Howard Gilman Opera House evening performances.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5 to Nevins St for Harvey
Theater) D, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue
Train: Long Island Railroad to Atlantic Terminal – Barclays Center
Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM
Car: Limited commercial parking lots are located near BAM. Visit BAM.org for information.

For ticket information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit BAM.org.