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PAGES FROM A FILMMAKER'S DIARY: A FILM RETROSPECTIVE AND REGIS DIALOGUE WITH GUY MADDIN

SERIES HIGHLIGHTS CAREER OF VISIONARY CANADIAN FILMMAKER

"Guy Maddin's body of work is as beautiful as it is confounding and delirious."—Zeitgeist Films

If Guy Maddin keeps a diary, it is certainly full of surprises. The work of this prolific filmmaker who shows us what he imagines in his daily life, filtered through his alternative history of motion pictures, will be presented by the Walker Art Center from February 4-14 with **Pages from a Filmmaker's Diary: A Film Retrospective and Regis Dialogue with Guy Maddin**. The series explores the recent works of this Winnipeg-born director, from his cult hit *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* (1988) to his two latest films making their regional premieres: a vaguely autobiographical video peep show entitled *Cowards Bend the Knee* (Wednesday, February 11, 7 pm) and his newest film—straight from Sundance and starring Isabella Rossellini—*The Saddest Music in the World* (Wednesday, February 4, 8 pm). "Only Isabella," Maddin says proudly, "could plop herself into one of my movies without destroying the perfumes. There's something timeless about her. She understands the Italian diva picture. And this is the first movie in which she plays a blonde. So at times it seems like she's channeling her mother [Ingrid Bergman]."

Winner of the U.S. National Society of Film Critics' prize for Best Experimental Film of the Year for *The Heart of the World* (2000), Maddin will be at the Walker on February 6 for a Regis Dialogue with *New York Times* critic Elvis Mitchell. Pages from a Filmmaker's Diary concludes on Saturday, February 14, with Dusk-to-Dawn Maddin, a selection of the filmmaker's works that will be screened during the Walker's Closing Party. Films will be screened back-to-back in the Lecture

(more)

Room between 9:30 pm and 5 am, and two of Maddin's short films will be on view in Gallery 3 from 9:30 pm to 12 midnight.

The youngest-ever recipient of a Telluride Lifetime Achievement Award at age 39, Maddin has a long list of films that have established his signature style. His International Emmy Award-winning *Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary* (2002) is a tour de force. Reinterpreting Bram Stoker's gothic classic through a performance by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Maddin presents what the *New York Sun* deemed "quick-witted and dazzling. Imagine Murnau's *Nosferatu* remade by Kenneth Anger, edited by Eisenstein . . . and produced for Masterpiece Theatre." This critique hints at an absurdist bent that puts Maddin in good company with David Lynch and John Waters, and points to his deep love for the moods and techniques of cinematic history. "His reverence for early film shows in his handcrafted look of early 20th-century cinema: black and white, styled with deep chiaroscuro, and brought to life with melodramatic storytelling," says Sheryl Mousley, Walker Associate Curator of Film/Video.

Pages from a Filmmaker's Diary: A Film Retrospective and Regis Dialogue with Guy Maddin is made possible by generous support from the Regis Foundation. Special thanks to IFC Films for the print of *The Saddest Music in the World*.

All films directed by Guy Maddin. For information, call 612.375.7622. Unless otherwise noted, screenings take place in the Auditorium.

**PAGES FROM A FILMMAKER'S DIARY: A FILM RETROSPECTIVE AND REGIS
DIALOGUE WITH GUY MADDIN
FEBRUARY 4-14**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 8 PM

Regional Premiere

The Saddest Music in the World

\$7 (\$5 Walker members)

Maddin's newest film is fresh from its premiere at the Sundance Film Festival. Set in 1933, the height of the Great Depression, the story follows beer baroness Lady Port-Huntley (Isabella Rossellini) who, in order to boost sales, announces a global competition to determine the saddest music in the world. Musicians from every corner of the globe, including Siam, Mexico, and Scotland, flock to wintry Winnipeg—the world capital of sorrow—to vie for the colossal \$25,000 prize. Adapting an original screenplay by Kazuo Ishiguro, Booker Prize-winning author of *The Remains of the Day*, Maddin uses tantalizing black-and-white imagery in the style of a Golden Age

musical melodrama to create a visually rapturous, appallingly funny tour de force. *The Saddest Music in the World*, resplendent with battles of passions, fears, all-consuming love, and devastation, is a feast for the senses driven by vintage Maddin rhythms. 2003, Canada, BW/color, 35mm, 99 minutes.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 8 PM

Regis Dialogue: Guy Maddin and Elvis Mitchell

\$12 (\$8 Walker members)

Guy Maddin talks onstage with Elvis Mitchell, film critic for the *New York Times*. Their dialogue explores Maddin's life work, his sense of humor, and his love for the history of cinema.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 7 PM

Cowards Bend the Knee

\$7 (\$5 Walker members)

Begun as a 10-part peep show at the Rotterdam Film Festival in 2003, *Cowards Bend the Knee* is now a video feature that fictionalizes a twisted mirror image of Maddin's own life. Set between a darkly shadowed sports arena and a two-way-mirrored beauty salon, the story offers up vengeful ghosts and uncontrollable extremities as windows into the unconscious. Casting himself as a hockey sniper falling under the spell of mother and daughter femmes fatales, the filmmaker unleashes sordid family secrets: "A lovingly self-loathing peek at myself, but only as I would have enough courage to look—through a cracked glass made foggy by hairspray." 2004, Canada, BW, video, 60 minutes.

with

Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary

This widely acclaimed masterpiece beautifully transposes the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's interpretation of Bram Stoker's classic vampire yarn from stage to screen. With Zhang Wei-Qiang dancing the title role, Maddin has forged a sumptuous, erotically charged feast of dance, drama, and shadow, fringed with the expressionistic strains of Gustav Mahler. "Maddin's work testifies to the notion that the past knows more than the present and that silent cinema is a richer, dreamier, sexier, and more resonant medium than what we're accustomed to seeing in the multiplexes" (*Chicago Reader*). 2002, Canada, BW/color, 35mm, 75 minutes.

CLOSING-NIGHT CELEBRATION: DUSK-TO-DAWN MADDIN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Party/Films/Performance: 9 pm–5 am \$30 (\$15 Walker members)

Films/Performance only: 11 pm–5 am \$14 (\$7 Walker members)

As part of the Closing Party, the Walker presents a program of back-to-back Guy Maddin films. Settle in for features in the Lecture Room, or drop by Gallery 3 for a pair of short works.

Waiting for Twilight, 9:30 pm

This documentary, directed by Noam Gonick and narrated by Tom Waits, captures Maddin's creative mind as he shoots his 1997 feature, *Twilight of the Ice Nymphs*. Along the way the director reflects on uncanny points in his life—reeking of perm solution from his family's Icelandic beauty parlor where he grew up, scrubbing down hockey players as stick boy for the 1967 Canadian National Hockey Team, and receiving chest medication to ward off the sensation of being touched by heavenly bodies. Included are clips from his first three features, *Tales from the Gimli Hospital*, *Archangel*, and *Careful*, interjected with the filmmaker's self-effacing musings as he describes the

difficulties of creating the artistically challenging work *Twilight of the Ice Nymphs*. 1997, Canada, color, 16mm, 60 minutes.

Tales from the Gimli Hospital, 10:30 pm

In the tradition of cult midnight movies, Maddin constructs an eccentric and innovative tale of two patients who befriend each other during their quarantine in a surrealistic hospital during a smallpox epidemic. Set in a deliberately artificial world of curious time and place, the story unfolds as a secret is unleashed and the friendship soon deteriorates in favor of fevered delirium and cruel revenge. Maddin purposely damaged the film in order to give it an antiquated, early silent-film feel that oddly complements his stream-of-consciousness imagery. 1988, Canada, BW, 16mm, 72 minutes.

Archangel, 12 midnight

This anomalous feature, set in 1917 arctic Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution, chronicles a love triangle between three young soldiers and their obsessions initiated by mistaken identity and memory disorders. Striking black-and-white cinematography sets the stage for Maddin's ridiculous romantic comedy, which draws stylistically, like many of his films, from past and forgotten conventions of silent cinema. 1991, Canada, BW, 16mm, 90 minutes.

Careful, 1:30 am

This melodrama is set in a fictional Alpine village where everyone speaks in whispers for fear of an avalanche and has learned from childhood the imperative "Careful!" The repressed and overly polite atmosphere, in which even sneezes are withheld, leads to fatal attractions (including some familial) among the inhabitants. With the vividly re-created sound of early cinema and colors reminiscent of two-strip Technicolor, the film opens a time warp into another dimension. 1992, Canada, color, 16mm, 100 minutes.

Twilight of the Ice Nymphs, 3:30 am

An elaborate gothic film, *Twilight of the Ice Nymphs* revolves around the mystical characters of Mandragora—a strange, synthetic land of tidal pools, endless orange skies, ostrich farms, and a never-setting sun. The inhabitants are a delirious cast, featuring Frank Gorshin, Shelley Duvall, and R. H. Thomson, enmeshed in a maddening spiral of seductions, unfulfilled passions, and homicidal madness. The imagery was inspired by hues of color photocopies (aqua, magenta, chartreuse) turned ethereal and the Symbolist paintings of Gustave Moreau. 1997, Canada, color, video, 92 minutes.

Two Short Films by Guy Maddin

Saturday, February 14, 9:30 pm–12 midnight
Gallery 3

Odilon Redon

A father and son become rivals for the same girl after rescuing her from a train crash. 1995, Canada/U.K., BW, video, 5 minutes.

The Heart of the World

Commissioned for the 25th anniversary of the Toronto International Film Festival, this award-winning short is a brilliant parody of silent Soviet propaganda films. 2000, Canada, BW, video, 6 minutes.

**The Walker Art Center is located at 725 Vineland Place,
at Lyndale Avenue South, Minneapolis, one block off Highway I-94.
For public information, call 612.375.7622.
Gallery hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, 10 am–5 pm;
Thursday, 10 am–9 pm; Sunday, 11 am–5 pm; closed Monday.
<http://www.walkerart.org>**