**GLOBAL ICONS**

In conversation with the Society for the Humanities, whose Society Mellon Graduate Fellow Lawrence Chua introduces Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (2010), a Thai-set, 21st Century tale of compassion. The series is cosponsored with the Society for the Humanities. Special thanks to Kay Dickinson, Joshua Clover and Lawrence Chua for help with programming.

**Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives**

*Apun Songtham, directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul*

In this Thai take on the Western, a fisherman (Arthit Suparat) and his son (Sondoree Sirisute) rescue a man (Aek Atlantic) who has been shipwrecked at sea. The man tells the story of his past lives, which are reenacted by actors such as Manara Suwanarux. These lives range from the mythical to the modern, and the ‘nonhuman’ beings at the margins of capitalism that do not fit squarely within the time and space of Thai and Western narrative.

**Secret Sunshine**

*Lee Chang-dong, 2007*

In this Korean tale of a mother and daughter’s visit to their plot of land in the country, the daughter (Jeon Do-yeon) is drawn to the idea of how a people will recognize in themselves the force to overturn the order of things, and that they have the ever-present possibility that a people will recognize in themselves the force to overturn the order of things.

**Black Swan**

*Sidney kingsley and Arthur Miller, adapted and directed by Baz Luhrmann, 2010*

Baz Luhrmann’s re-imagining of Arthur Miller’s 1947 play stars Natalie Portman as Nina, a ballerina who dreams of superstardom. When her boss (Barbra Streisand) selects Nina to play the lead in a production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, Nina realizes that she could have been the star of a film based on the play. Nina’s fierce dedication to her art puts her at odds with her conservative mother, as well as with her romantic interest, Diesel (Owen Wilson).

**Dogtooth**

*Yorgos Lanthimos, 2009*

A modern Greek tale of Oscar and Linda, two siblings caught in the web of torture. Poetry as a poetic device. Poetry “stands out as much more than a famous mustache: he was an actor, director, producer and composer (Chaplin scored his own films).”

**Secret Sunshine**

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Can recall His Past Lives

**Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives**

Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul, this year's Best Foreign Language Film nominee, is a poetic meditation on the processes of consciousness and memory. Boonmee struggles to keep the light of consciousness alight as he faces the end of his life. He is joined by his past selves, his wife, and a group of people who find themselves suddenly transported into Boonmee's consciousness. As the film unfolds, we are presented with a series of images and memories that challenge our understanding of the nature of consciousness. The film is a powerful exploration of the human experience and a testament to the power of cinema to transcend language and cultural boundaries.

**In a Better World**

Directed by Susanne Bier, this film tells the story of a Danish diplomat who, after the death of his wife, must navigate the complexities of his work and personal life in order to bring about peace in a war-torn country. The film explores themes of politics, morality, and the human condition, and is a powerful reminder of the importance of empathy and compassion in times of conflict.

**The King's Speech**

Directed by Tom Hooper, this film tells the story of King George VI, who suffers from a severe stammer and must overcome his fear of public speaking in order to address his country. The film is a testament to the power of the human spirit and the importance of perseverance in the face of adversity.

**The Illusionist**

Directed by Stephen Frears, this film tells the story of a master magician who, in the wake of his professional decline, is forced to confront the mysteries of his own past. The film explores themes of art, magic, and the search for meaning in a world that can be both beautiful and cruel.

**The Red Shoes**

Directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, this film tells the story of a young ballerina who must choose between the allure of stardom and the demands of her art. The film is a masterpiece of the Hollywood musical and a timeless exploration of the choices that Define our lives.

**The Graduate**

Directed by Mike Nichols, this film tells the story of a young man who must navigate the complexities of college life, career, and love. The film is a classic of the New Hollywood era and a timeless exploration of the search for identity in a world that can be both exhilarating and frustrating.

**Back to the Future**

Directed by Robert Zemeckis, this film tells the story of a young man who travels back in time to prevent a disaster that threatens the future. The film is a classic of the sci-fi genre and a timeless exploration of the possibilities of time travel.

**Inception**

Directed by Christopher Nolan, this film tells the story of a team of mercenaries who are hired to plant an idea into the mind of a wealthy businessman. The film is a masterwork of the action genre and a timeless exploration of the power of the human mind.

**The Big Lebowski**

Directed by Joel Coen and Ethan Coen, this film tells the story of a man who is mistaken for a millionaire and is drawn into a world of crime and celebrity. The film is a classic of the dark comedy genre and a timeless exploration of the absurdities of the modern world.

**The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring**

Directed by Peter Jackson, this film tells the story of a group of hobbits who embark on a quest to destroy a powerful ring and save Middle-earth from destruction. The film is a classic of the fantasy genre and a timeless exploration of the power of friendship and heroism.