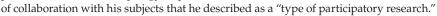


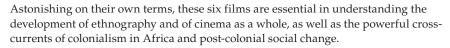
JEAN ROUCH (1917-2004) was one of the 20th-century's most important documentary filmmakers, and a revolutionary force in the fields of cultural and visual anthropology, and colonial and post-colonial African studies.

After working as a civil engineer in West Africa during World War II, between 1946 when he made his first film in Niger, and his death in 2004, Rouch made more than 100 films, most of them on African subjects.

In France he taught for more than 50 years at the *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes*, helped launch the *cinéma vérité* movement, and exerted a profound influence on the young filmmakers of the French New Wave. In 1968, Jacques Rivette would say that "Rouch is the force behind all French cinema of the past ten years."

The six films being released now represent the most sustained flourishing of his practice of "shared anthropology," a process



















THE MAD MASTERS (Les Maîtres fous)

A film by Jean Rouch

"A remarkable documentary, which ideally should be seen by anyone connected with anthropology."

— Jean Claude Muller, American Anthropologist

"An anthropological classic...widely considered to be one of the most profound explorations of an African view of the colonial world."

—Senses of Cinema

1957 Venice Biennale

28 minutes | color | 1955 Sale/DVD (chaptered): \$298



The most controversial of Rouch's films, THE MAD MASTERS depicts a possession ritual of the Hauka religious sect using the delirious techniques of "ciné-trance."

The film opens on the bustling streets of Accra, the capital of the Gold Coast (modern day Ghana), a major British colonial port city that serves as a stage for the collision of the traditional and the modern. Among the many groups who populate the city are members of the Hauka religious movement.

From Accra, THE MAD MASTERS takes us to the rural compound that is the site for an annual Hauka ceremony. Here, Hauka mediums nominate initiates and listen to penitents, before leading them all in a dizzying, spectacular trance ritual. The spirits who possess the Hauka are figures associated with the Gold Coast's British colonial rulers, giving the ritual an element of political critique.

After the ceremony, Rouch returns us to Accra, where we see the Hauka in their daily lives as laborers, low-ranking soldiers, or pickpockets. Rouch suggests that the ritual serves in part as a psychological release from the dehumanizing powers of colonization.



MOI. UN NOIR

A film by Jean Rouch

MOI, UN NOIR marked Rouch's break with traditional ethnography, and his embrace of the collaborative and improvisatory strategies he called "shared ethnography" and "ethno-fiction."

The film depicts an ordinary week in the lives of men and women from Niger who have migrated to Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire for work. "Edward G. Robinson"—Omarou Ganda, who like the film's other subject-collaborators plays himself under the name of a Western movie star—narrates the film, recreating dialogue and providing freewheeling commentary on his experiences.

Robinson describes the bitter reality of life in Treichville, a poor inner suburb populated largely by migrants, and his work as a day laborer (bozori) in the ports, which contrasts harshly with the rich fantasy life he also shares.

MOI, UN NOIR captures both the sorrows and the occasional joys of these migrants' experience in all their psychological complexity.

"In principle, an African could have made it, but none of us were in a position to do so at the time."

—Ousmane Sembène

"MOI, UN NOIR is, in effect, the most daring of films and the humblest."

-Jean-Luc Godard

"Obliterates the boundaries between fact and fiction, documentary and story, observation and participation, objectivity and subjectivity."

—Paul Stoller, Visual Anthropology Review

1958 Prix
Louis Delluc

1958 Mannheim Film Festival

70 minutes | color | 1958 Sale/DVD (chaptered): \$375

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JEAN ROUCH FILMS
AND SAVE
see page 7 for details!

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JAGUAR

A film by Jean Rouch

"Infused with what Italo Calvino called the brilliance of "lightness"...
Rouch forces us to confront a wide array of colonialist assumptions: that in their "backwardness" Africans have no sense of the wanderlust; that in their "backwardness" Africans do not extract wisdom from their journeys.
With great humor, JAGUAR shatters our expectations."—Paul Stoller,
Visual Anthropology Review

88 minutes | color | 1967 Sale/DVD (chaptered): \$398



BUY ALL SIX JEAN ROUCH FILMS AND SAVE see page 7 for details! JAGUAR follows three young Songhay men from Niger—Lam Ibrahim, Illo Goudel'ize, and the legendary performer Damouré Zika—on a journey to the Gold Coast (modern day Ghana).

Drawing from his own fieldwork on intra-African migration, Rouch collaborated with his three subjects on an improvisational narrative. The four filmed the trip in mid-1950s, and reunited a few years later to record the sound, the participants remembering dialogue and making up commentary.

Driven by Rouch's notion of "shared ethnography", JAGUAR offers a more complex portrait of African life than most Western films. The collaboration between filmmaker and subjects reveals a wide range of ethnic, geographic, and cultural differences within just a small piece of the African continent, as well as the social changes and patterns of migration that shaped mid-century African life.



LITTLE BY LITTLE

A film by Jean Rouch

In LITTLE BY LITTLE, Rouch's Nigerien collaborators Damouré Zika and Lam Ibrahim travel to Paris and end up performing a reverse ethnography of French culture.

When we re-join Zika and Ibrahim in Ayorou, Niger, they are running a large import-export company. Hearing that a competitor is building a multistory building in Niamey, the directors of the company decide they must construct their own in Ayorou.

Zika flies to Paris to study the city's skyscrapers and meet with architects for advice. However his mission quickly broadens into a full-fledged investigation of French life, using methods which begin to resemble those of European anthropology, and give a darkly comic charge to the proceedings.

Ibrahim eventually joins Zika in France, and the pair fall into their own version of contemporary European life, along the way picking up a Senegalese clothing designer, a white French typist, and a hobo, all of whom return with them to Niger to work for the company.

The most cutting of Rouch's films, LITTLE BY LITTLE playfully satirizes the history of European-African relations.

"A truly mesmerizing, frequently hilarious, and provocative masterpiece."—Eric Kohn, Cineaste

nature of identity and selfhood in the colonial and postcolonial context." —Michael Laramee, Three Documentary Filmmakers: Errol Morris,

"A film of tremendous insight into the

1970 Venice Biennale

92 minutes | color | 1969 Sale/DVD (chaptered): \$398

Ross McElwee, Jean Rouch



4 ICARUS FILMS

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THE LION HUNTERS

A film by Jean Rouch

"A film with great ethnographic detail...In THE LION HUNTERS Rouch is not content merely to challenge us with profound questions of human existence. His film also forces us to reflect on how we categorize experience, how we re-create our sociocultural universe."

—Paul Stoller, The Cinematic Griot: The Ethnography of Jean Rouch

Golden Lion Award, 1965
Venice Film Festival

1965 London Film Festival

1965 New York

77 minutes | color | 1965 Sale/DVD (chaptered): \$398



Filmed along the border between Niger and Mali, THE LION HUNTERS is Rouch's documentation of the lion hunt performed by the *gow hunters* of the Songhay people.

Opening on the Niger River, the film travels north to "the bush that is farther than far." Here, Fulani cattle herders have requested the help of the gow in eliminating a lion, nicknamed "The American" for his cruel cunning, which has been killing their cows.

As the Songhay society's designated hunters, the gow have developed a series of rituals to precede the hunt. We see them fashioning their bow and arrows from tree branches, and preparing the Boto poison with which they will coat the arrows, a process accompanied by a series of dances and incantations.

The gow lay traps, and test the poison on a hyena and a civet cat, but even these measures are not enough to prepare us for their confrontation with the ferocious "American."

THE LION HUNTERS portrays the immediacy of the hunt, but it also explores the complex social organization that underlies it, and the difficult questions entailed by its representation.



MAMMY WATER

A film by Jean Rouch

On the coast of Ghana, in the shadows of the Portuguese slave forts, lies the Gulf of Guinea. This sea is home to the "surf boys," teams of fisherman who paddle into the ocean in large canoes, sometimes staying at sea for one or even two nights.

In MAMMY WATER, Rouch depicts the surf boys of the coastal village of Shama, at the foot of the Pra River. Their success is governed by water spirits ('Mammy Water'). When the catch is bad, villagers must honor the spirits with a ceremony if they wish to change their fortunes.

The film captures one such ceremony. The whole village takes part in a procession that concludes with a series of offerings to the sea. Afterwards, surf boys pile into their canoes and head back into the ocean.

More strictly observational than most of Rouch's films, MAMMY WATER takes an intimate look at the spiritual traditions and the wider life of one West African fishing village.

These six films by Jean Rouch were produced by Pierre Braunberger (1905-1990), a central figure in French cinema since the 1920s. Rouch and Braunberger met at the famous "Festival du Film Maudit" organized in 1949 by Jean Cocteau in Biarritz.



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to shore with a copious catch, young boys play in the gentle waves of a now-tranquil ocean, and the voice declines to comment as the images are left to communicate the relaxed joy of the moment."

—Senses of Cinema

18 minutes | color | 1956

"In MAMMY WATER (1955), after a

ritual sacrifice is held to appease the

angry ocean spirits, fishermen return

18 minutes | color | 1956 Sale/DVD (chaptered): \$248



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