In 1975 Jean Renoir was awarded an honorary Academy Award for his lifetime contribution to film. He is considered one of the first great auteurs, a cinematic master whose distinctive style always contained a concern for human issues and a reverence for natural beauty.

As the son of the great impressionist painter, Auguste Renoir, the filmmaker as a young man was encouraged to freely explore artistic and intellectual pursuits. He eventually chose ceramics, but during a long convalescence, developed a passion for film. He started his own production company in 1924, largely in order to launch the acting career of his wife, Catherine Hessling. His first film, LA FILLE DE L’EAU (1925) THE WHIRLPOOL OF FATE, and other silent films display early signs of what was to become characteristic of Renoir’s work—a sense of visual realism, the love of nature and the poetic representation of the physical environment. Film theorist Andre Bazin praised Renoir’s early works for their modest use of camera movement and editing and emphasis on deep focus photography. Bazin argued that these techniques could lead the spectator to a more direct relationship with the landscapes and characters.

It was Renoir’s “Popular Front” films of the late 1930s which brought him international acclaim. These films include such incontrovertible cinematic classics as LE CRIME DE M. LANGE (1936) THE CRIME OF MR. LANGE, LA BETE HUMAINE (1938) THE HUMAN BEAST, LA REGLE DU JEU (1939) THE RULES OF THE GAME and LA GRANDE ILLUSION (1937) THE GRAND ILLUSION. Renoir lived in the United States in the 1940s and continued his career under 20th-Century Fox. His films from the time period include THIS LAND IS MINE (1943), DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID (1946), and THE WOMAN ON THE BEACH (1947). UCLA Film and Television Archive has preserved the 1945 film, THE SOUTHERNER. Although Renoir considered his tenure in Hollywood a period of “unrealized works and unrealized hopes,” this film is a beautifully crafted story of a migrant worker who tries to start his own farm and who faces enormous hardship. Before Renoir returned to France, he traveled to India to make THE RIVER (1951). The film was made in Technicolor, and Renoir used this to explore the texture of the Indian landscape and culture.
Jean Renoir

FILMS
(this is only a partial list – consult the Archive Research and Study Center for further listings)


Boudu Sauvé des Eaux (*Boudu Saved From Drowning*) (1932). Les Films Sirius/ Pathé Renn Production. Producers, Michel Simon, Jean Gehret. Director, Writer, Jean Renoir. Cast, Michel Simon, Charles Grandval, Marcelle Hainia, Séverine Lerczinska. Boudu [is] a Parisian tramp who takes a suicidal plunge into the Seine and is rescued by a well-to-do bookseller, Édouard Lestingois. The Lestingois family decides to take in the irrepressible bum, and he shows his gratitude by shaking the household to its foundations. Study Copy: DVD2766 M


La Grande Illusion (*The Grand Illusion*) (1937). Cinédis. Producer, Raymond Blondy. Director, Jean Renoir. Writers, Charles Spaak, Jean Renoir. Cast, Jean Gabin, Pierre Fresnay, Erich von Stroheim, Dita Parlo. Renoir’s best-known film stars Jean Gabin as a working-class lieutenant and Pierre Fresnay as an aristocratic captain, shot down behind German lines in World War I. Eric von Stroheim’s Captain von Rauffenstein invites the men to dine with him before being escorted to a prisoner-of-war camp, where they form a diverse community with fellow prisoners. Fraternal relationships among the officers and soldiers of both sides complicate class and national boundaries in Renoir’s poignant plea for an end to the hostilities of war. Study Copy: DVD2643 M


This Land is Mine (1943). RKO. Director, Jean Renoir. Writer, Dudley Nichols. Cast, Charles Laughton, Maureen O’Hara, George Sanders, Walter Slezak. A mild-mannered schoolteacher in a Nazi occupied town during WWII finds himself being torn between collaboration and resistance. Study Copy: DVD10734 M
Jean Renoir

The Southerner (1945). United Artists. Producers, David L. Loew, Robert Hakim. Director, Jean Renoir. Writers, Jean Renoir, Hugo Butler. Cast, Zachary Scott, Betty Field, Beulah Bondi, Bunny Sunshine. The story of one year in the life of a farmhand who is tired of working for others and who decides to go it alone with his wife, his old mother, and his small son. He finds a patch of wasteland and builds a shack on it, and then has to fight off a malicious neighbor, the elements, and malnutrition. Study Copy: VA5745 M


INTERVIEWS AND PROFILES

Clete Roberts World Report. Unidentified Issue. Jean Renoir Interview (195-?). MOS footage of Renoir in his home, possibly filmed for use alongside an interview with the director. Study Copy: VA18940 T

Tournage du Déjeuner sur l’Herbe (1959?). Behind the scenes footage of Renoir and others during filming of Le Déjeuner sur l’Herbe. Study Copy: VA5644 M


Study Copy: VA5829 T

Interview. Jean Renoir (ca. 1962 to 1965). BBC-TV. Film director Jean Renoir is interviewed at his boyhood home in the south of France near Nice. The discussion centers on his father, painter Pierre Auguste Renoir. Study Copy: VA5940 T


Auskunft über Jean Renoir (Information About Jean Renoir) (1964 or 1965). Documentary on Jean Renoir and René Clair. Study Copy: VA6509 T

L’Album de Famille de Jean Renoir (1965). Director, Roland Grittì. Interviewer, Pierre Desgraupes. Director Jean Renoir is interviewed by Pierre Desgraupes. [In French]. Study Copy: VA6348 T


Jean Renoir


*Le Direction d'Acteur par Jean Renoir* (1968). Films de la Pléide/ Pierre Braunberger Présente. Director, Gisele Braunberger. [In French with no English subtitles]. Study Copy: VAT709 M

*Interview. Alexander Sesonske Interviews Jean Renoir* (1969-04-12). Interview conducted with Jean Renoir at his Beverly Hills home for a documentary about Renoir which was never completed. Partially edited version. Study Copy: VA18935 M

*Interview. Jean Renoir* (1974?). May have been on the occasion of the awarding of Art Center College of Design degree doctor of [?] letters, January 25, 1974. Study Copy: VAT805 M

*The Director. Norman Lloyd* (1977-02-01). Actor/director Norman Lloyd is interviewed on his career, working with Charlie Chaplin, Alfred Hitchcock, Jean Renoir, Orson Welles and others. Inventory Number: T22971


PRINT RESOURCES
(for more information consult the UCLA Arts Library)


RELATED RESOURCES

The Performing Arts Library Special Collections unit of the UCLA Libraries Special Collection holds various materials related to Jean Renoir in the Jean Renoir Papers collection. For more information, please contact Performing Arts Library Special Collections: (310) 825-7253; or visit their finding aid online at: [http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf796nb4fk/](http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf796nb4fk/)