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 M. 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). The 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)


The Southerner (1945). United Artists. Director, Jean Renoir. Writers, Jean Renoir and Hugo Butler. Study Copy: VA5745 M

La Bête Humaine (Human Beast) (1938). Producer, Roland Tual. Director and Writer, Jean Renoir. Study Copy: DVD2580 M


Boudu Sauvé des Eaux (Boudu Saved From Drowning) (1932). Producers, Michel Simon, Jean Gehret. Director and Writer, Jean Renoir. Study Copy: DVD2766 M


La Petite Marchande d’Allumettes (Little Matchgirl) (1928). Producers, Jean Renoir and Jean Tedesco. Director and Writer, Jean Renoir. Study Copy: VA2999 M

The Woman on the Beach (1947). RKO. Director, Jean Renoir. Writers, Jean Renoir and Frank Davis. Study Copy: DVD9680 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

Tourage 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


Jean Renoir

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

Study Copy: VA5950 T

Study Copy: VA6509 T


Study Copy: VA6511 -12 T


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: VA5805 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


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 view their finding aid online at http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf796nb4fk/.