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## **Milwaukee Film Celebrates Women's History Month with Directorial Debuts at Oriental Theatre**

*Throughout the month of March, Milwaukee Film celebrates the power, creativity, and resilience of women in the film industry with screenings of women's feature directorial debuts*



**MILWAUKEE – Monday, February 19th** – Milwaukee Film is honored to be celebrating [Women's History Month](#) with a groundbreaking series of films that showcase the extraordinary debuts of talented women who dared to challenge the status quo. Milwaukee Film's programming team meticulously selected five first feature films from directors Chloé Zhao, Cauleen Smith, Susan Seidelman, Agnès Varda, and Lucrecia Martel to screen throughout the month of March.

Women's History Month is a time to celebrate and honor the achievements, contributions, and progress made by women throughout history. It is a month dedicated to recognizing the pivotal role women have played in shaping societies, cultures, and economies. From trailblazing pioneers who shattered glass ceilings to unsung heroes who fought for equality and justice, Women's History Month serves as a platform to acknowledge the diverse and remarkable accomplishments of women across the globe.

“This year for Women's History Month, we're celebrating debut features from many of the female filmmakers we all know and love today,” enthused Kerstin Larson, Programming Director at Milwaukee Film. “I'm always excited to watch a director's first feature because it displays their originality and creativity unburdened by Hollywood standards.”

### [Drylongso](#) - 3/4/24

A lost treasure of 1990s DIY filmmaking, Cauleen Smith's *Drylongso* embeds an incisive look at racial injustice within a lovingly handmade buddy movie/murder mystery/ romance. Alarmed by the rate at which the young Black men around her are dying—indeed, “becoming extinct,” as she sees it—brash Oakland art student Pica (Toby Smith) attempts to preserve their existence in Polaroid snapshots, along the way forging a friendship with a woman in an abusive relationship (April Barnett), experiencing love and loss, and being drawn into the search for a serial killer who is terrorizing the city. Capturing the vibrant community spirit of Oakland in the nineties, Smith crafts both a rare cinematic celebration of Black female creativity and a moving elegy for a generation of lost African American men.

### [Smithereens](#) - 3/11/24

In Susan Seidelman's directorial debut, wild teen Wren (Susan Berman) trades NJ for NYC, where she hopes to join what's left of punk culture. She hangs out with fellow transplant Paul (Brad Rijn), but he's too safe for her tastes — which run to narcissistic rockers. She finds one in Eric (punk icon Richard Hell), about to cut a record in LA. Before long, Wren plans to accompany Eric out west, but it's clear she's trusted the wrong person.

### [Songs My Brother Taught Me](#) - 3/18/24

Released in 2015, *Songs My Brother Taught Me* is the feature film debut from Chloé Zhao, Academy Award winning director of *Nomadland*. With an older brother in jail and living with their single mother on Pine Ridge Reservation, Johnny and his sister Jashuan's lives develop new challenges when their absentee cowboy father suddenly dies. The loss prompts Johnny to strike out for Los Angeles, but would mean leaving behind his beloved sister.

### [La Pointe Courte](#) - 3/25/24

The great Agnès Varda's film career began with this graceful, penetrating study of a marriage on the rocks, set against the backdrop of a small Mediterranean fishing village. Both a stylized depiction of the complicated relationship between a married couple (played by Silvia Monfort and Philippe Noiret) and a documentary-like look at the daily struggles of the locals, Varda's discursive, gorgeously filmed debut was radical enough to later be considered one of the progenitors of the coming French New Wave.

### [La Ciénaga](#) - 4/1/24

The release of Lucrecia Martel's *La Ciénaga* heralded the arrival of an astonishingly vital and original voice in Argentine cinema. With a radical and disturbing take on narrative, beautiful cinematography, and a highly sophisticated use of on- and offscreen sound, Martel turns her tale of a dissolute bourgeois extended family, whiling away the hours of one sweaty, sticky summer, into a cinematic marvel. This visceral take on class, nature, sexuality, and the ways that political turmoil and social stagnation can

manifest in human relationships is a drama of extraordinary tactility, and one of the great contemporary film debuts.

**All Tickets and showtimes can be found online at [mkefilm.org/whm](https://mkefilm.org/whm).**

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### **About Milwaukee Film**

Milwaukee Film is a nonprofit arts organization dedicated to entertaining, educating, and engaging our community through cinematic experiences, with a vision to make Milwaukee a center for film culture. Milwaukee Film operates the magnificent Oriental Theatre, a historic cinema palace committed to high-quality and accessible film and education programming. The 16th annual Milwaukee Film Festival will be held April 11 - 25, 2024. For more information or to become a Member, visit [mkefilm.org](https://mkefilm.org).

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