

Since the 1960s, International Cinema (IC) has shown thousands of films, ranging from drama to action and documentary to comedy. These screenings have helped students learn new languages, become more aware of other cultures, and examine various genres of film. As Marie-Laure Oscarson, assistant director of International Cinema, puts it, "What better way to learn a language than when you can see people speak it in real cultural contexts?" Today we shine the spotlight on a few of the past semester's standout events from IC.

REAL LIFE ON FILM

Every semester, IC presents a variety of films and film genres. Recently, IC highlighted documentary film and filmmakers of both past and present.

Emmy-nominated film professor Brad Barber presented on Dziga Vertov's Bolshevik-era documentary *Man with a Movie Camera*. Filmed in 1929, it highlighted everyday life for the people of Soviet Russia. Barber explained that being a successful documentarian does not require a certain background or education level—it only requires the ability to find beauty in the ordinary.

"MAYBE YOU HAVE SEEN ME ON TV . . . NACHOOOOOOOOOO!"

The film *Nacho Libre* may not seem like an obvious candidate for IC, particularly because it was written by American filmmakers. However, the film is loosely based on a true story and was filmed entirely in Mexico—giving it cultural context. The movie also acts as a parody of El

Santo, a Mexican *luchador* folk hero who starred in many films during the twentieth century. In winter 2023, IC screened *Nacho Libre* with the goal of anchoring the film in its El Santo-style tradition, which is naturally campy. Before the screening of the film, IC invited the audience to enjoy Mexican candies and a performance by BYU's mariachi band. These activities helped the viewers embrace Mexican culture and gain an appreciation for movie parodies.

OUR NEXT GUEST ON THE SHOW

In addition to its weekly movies and lecture series, IC directors host a biweekly podcast. A more recent addition to the program, the podcast provides a venue for hosts to discuss one of the films shown over the past two weeks. The podcasts focus on the complex elements of each film. The hosts also interview film specialists who offer more insights about the weekly films. On one episode, Professor Rob McFarland (European Reception of America) spoke to IC codirector Marc Olivier (Film and Media, French) about the German film *The Lives of Others*, which told the story of citizens in East Berlin finding self-expression while their government constantly spied on them. During the episode, McFarland said, "An artist is a free radical. An artist will follow art, not necessarily the art that people want them to make."

FIN

IC has done a lot this year to help students contextualize foreign cultures and learn about documentary filmmaking. IC has given students the chance to not simply learn about films from different countries but also to embrace foreign films and learn about different cultures through their art. **H**

LICHT!
A SEMESTER IN INTERNATIONAL CINEMA • BY GARRETT GUNNELL (ENGLISH 25)
CAMÉRA! ACCIÓN!