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| **Rohmer, Éric (1920-2010)** |
| **Schéer, Jean-Marie-Maurice** |
| Éric Rohmer (born Jean-Marie-Maurice Schéer) was a French film director, screenwriter and film critic, best known for his association with the French New Wave, his sophisticated films exploring the intersections of romantic desire and moral choice. A student of literature, theology and philosophy with a degree in history, Rohmer started as a teacher, but soon gravitated, like many future New Wave directors, towards Henri Langlois’ Cinématheque Française and he also began writing for *Cahiers du Cinéma* in 1951. He was the editor of Cahiers du Cinéma from 1957–1963. |
| Éric Rohmer (born Jean-Marie-Maurice Schéer) was a French film director, screenwriter and film critic, best known for his association with the French New Wave, his sophisticated films exploring the intersections of romantic desire and moral choice. A student of literature, theology and philosophy with a degree in history, Rohmer started as a teacher, but soon gravitated, like many future New Wave directors, towards Henri Langlois’ Cinématheque Française and he also began writing for *Cahiers du Cinéma* in 1951. He was the editor of Cahiers du Cinéma from 1957–1963.  Rohmer made mostly shorts in the early 1950s, but his career commenced in earnest in 1963 when he began work on *Six Moral Tales* - a cycle of films examining the complicated entanglements of moral and desire. Each film centers on a romantic triangle and is mainly concerned with the ways characters internalize and think about erotic satisfaction rather than act on it. The best known of the six films are Ma Nuit Chez Maud (*My Night* at *Maud*, 1969), in which a Catholic engineer resists the seduction attempts of a divorcée, and Le Genou de Claire (*Claire’s Knee*, 1970), the story of a diplomat who finds himself smitten with the knee of a young girl; he later sublimates this desire into an ambiguous act of compassion.  At heart, Rohmer is a moraliste - a student of human character and a philosopher of moral choice, in the manner of La Bruyère, La Rochefoucauld or Pascal. His films tend to be static and conversation heavy, and their considerable charm comes from the sophisticated wit of their dialogues. He saw cinema as more akin to novels, in its capacity to explore the characters’ psychologies, without negating its essential visuality: in his 1955 article ‘The Celluloid and the Marble’ he describes film as the only truly expressive and poetic art of the 20th century; such a statement would align him, somewhat surprisingly, with the modernist avant-garde of the 1920s and 30s. Although he worked with established actors from time to time (most notably Jean-Louis Trintignant), Rohmer preferred to cast non-professionals in his films.  Rohmer’s filmography is varied and lengthy, and includes many adaptations, most notably, 1976’s Die Marquise von O… (*The Marquise of O*) based on a novella by Kleist, and 1978’s Perceval la Gallois [*Perceval*]*,* a colorful, bejeweled take on Chrétien de Troyes’ 12th-century romance in which he sought to emulate the style of medieval illuminated manuscripts. In the early 1980s he started work on another series of six films titled *Comedies and Proverbs*, followed in the 1990s by the four films that make up *Tales of the Four Seasons*. In 2000 he directed L'anglaise et le duc (*The Lady and the Duke*), a period piece set during the French Revolution, notable by its innovative visuals which placed the characters against elaborately painted backdrops of 18th-century France. His last film, The Romance of Astrée and Celadon [Romance of Astree and Celadon], based on a 17th-century romance was released in 2007. Selected Filmography Les Signe du Lion (*Sign of Leo,* 1959)  Ma Nuit Chez Maud (*My Night at Maud’s,* 1969)  Le Genou de Claire (*Claire’s Knee,* 1970)  Die Marquise von O… (*The Marquise of O*, 1976)  Perceval la Gallois (*Perceval,* 1978)  Le Reyon Vert (*The Green Ray,* 1986)  L'ami de Mon Amie (*Boy Friends and Girl Friends,* 1987)  Conte d'automne (*An Autumn’s Tale,* 1998)  L'anglaise et le duc (*The Lady and the Duke*, 2000)  The Romance of Astrée and Celadon (*Romance of Astree and Celadon*, 2007) Two-part Interview with the Director  1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1eWsWVd8cjc 2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYKN0fBADM |
| Further reading:  (Cardullo)  (Crisp)  (Jones) |