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| Last Year at Marienbad |
| L'Année dernière à Marienbad |
| *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* (1961) is a black and white film directed by Alain Resnais (1922-2014) and scripted by the *nouveau romancier* (new novelist) Alain Robbe-Grillet (1922-2008). The film is considered an example of the cinematic modernist works of the French *Nouvelle Vague*. It is one of a sequence of films from Resnais’s early career — including *Nuit et Brouillard* [*Night and Fog*] (1955) and *Hiroshima, mon Amour* (1959, scripted by another new novelist, Marguerite Duras (1914-1996)) — which question the veracity of collective, historical memory. The association with this avant-garde, literary group alone could position these films in a modernist lineage, yet it was in fact Resnais’s editing, as it evolved through this period and matured in *Hiroshima* and *Marienbad*, that was especially innovative. The plot of the film, such as it is, concerns a man (simply referred to as ‘X’ in the script) attempting to persuade a woman (‘A’) that the previous year they met in a palatial hotel or spa and agreed to meet one year later to run away together. The modernist style ensures the narrative is elliptical and hypnagogic, which has inspired a proliferation of academic debate. For example, ‘X,’ in voiceover, often suggests a shared history, which is then contradicted in the images, or repeated with differences, allowing for disparate readings. This inherent ambiguity suggests a level of human isolation and disorientation that is a prevailing theme of the art-cinema canon of the 1960s, such as in the films of Ingmar Bergman and Michelangelo Antonioni. |
| *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* (1961) is a black and white film directed by Alain Resnais (1922-2014) and scripted by the *nouveau romancier* (new novelist) Alain Robbe-Grillet (1922-2008). The film is considered an example of the cinematic modernist works of the French *Nouvelle Vague*. It is one of a sequence of films from Resnais’s early career — including *Nuit et Brouillard* [*Night and Fog*] (1955) and *Hiroshima, mon Amour* (1959, scripted by another new novelist, Marguerite Duras (1914-1996)) — which question the veracity of collective, historical memory. The association with this avant-garde, literary group alone could position these films in a modernist lineage, yet it was in fact Resnais’s editing, as it evolved through this period and matured in *Hiroshima* and *Marienbad*, that was especially innovative. The plot of the film, such as it is, concerns a man (simply referred to as ‘X’ in the script) attempting to persuade a woman (‘A’) that the previous year they met in a palatial hotel or spa and agreed to meet one year later to run away together. The modernist style ensures the narrative is elliptical and hypnagogic, which has inspired a proliferation of academic debate. For example, ‘X,’ in voiceover, often suggests a shared history, which is then contradicted in the images, or repeated with differences, allowing for disparate readings. This inherent ambiguity suggests a level of human isolation and disorientation that is a prevailing theme of the art-cinema canon of the 1960s, such as in the films of Ingmar Bergman and Michelangelo Antonioni.  Link: http://www.criterion.com/films/1517-last-year-at-marienbad  1 The Criterion Collection trailer for *L'Année dernière à Marienbad/Last Year at Marienbad* |
| Further reading:  (Armes)  (Monaco)  (Wilson) |