

TREASURES FROM THE YALE FILM ARCHIVE

AN ONGOING SERIES OF CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY FILMS PRESENTED IN 35MM BY THE YALE FILM STUDY CENTER

WEDNESDAY
MAY 13, 2015
7:00PM • WHITNEY
HUMANITIES CENTER

BRICK

PRESENTED WITH SUPPORT FROM
PAUL L. JOSKOW '70 M.PHIL., '72 PH.D.



Dashiell Hammett goes to high school in this hard-boiled detective story set in the suburbs of Southern California. First-time director Rian Johnson (THE BROTHERS BLOOM, LOOPER, BREAKING BAD, and the upcoming STAR WARS: EPISODE VIII) wrote the script at age 23 in his first year out of USC, and spent the next six years raising the nearly half million dollars needed for the small-budget production, largely through loans from family and friends. The 20-day shooting schedule brought a cast of young actors to Johnson's hometown of San Clemente and even into his old high school, the location for much of the film. The audacious results were described as "bizarre and ingenious neo-noir" by Peter Bradshaw and "noir to its very bones" by Roger Ebert, and earned Johnson the Special Jury Prize for Originality of Vision at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival.

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LANGUAGE: The bad brick. The Pin. Tug. Poor Frisco. From the film's first dialogue scene, we are blitzed by highly stylized language that is at once familiar to the genre and unique to the world of BRICK. Johnson wrote the film's treatment as a prose novella in the style of Hammett in an effort to echo Hammett's dialogue and story pacing. "It was amazing how all the archetypes from that detective world slid perfectly over the high school types," Johnson observed. "It was really important for the audience to know, coming into it, that they were in a heightened version of a high school movie, and we couldn't do that with production design. The language was a way for me, without any money, to just make the audience instantly have to say, 'Oh, this isn't the real world. I have to adjust to this. This is sort of the equivalent of a comic book reality.'" He forbade his cast from watching classic detective movies, but had them familiarize themselves with his desired vocal style by watching THE APARTMENT, HIS GIRL FRIDAY, and SINGIN' IN THE RAIN. Though this style was new to most of BRICK's young actors, Joseph Gordon-Levitt had grown up utilizing this sort of snappy back-and-forth delivery on the television comedy 3RD ROCK FROM THE SUN.

INFLUENCES: Johnson was led to Hammett by a Coen Brothers interview in which they discussed his importance to MILLER'S CROSSING. "I went back and read the books, and they hit me in the middle of the head, like it was this amazing world that they called up inside me. And so, the initial intent with BRICK, taking a detective story and setting it inside a high school, was to try and get that world that I felt reading those books onto the screen." As a 21st century filmmaker, it isn't surprising that Johnson is drawing more from neo-noir influences than from the older classic film noir genre. The Coens' MILLER'S CROSSING and BLOOD SIMPLE, David Lynch's TWIN PEAKS, and the anime series COWBOY BEBOP are cited by Johnson, with Roman Polanski's CHINATOWN mentioned as an important antecedent in establishing a SoCal noir visual style (like BRICK, it blends noir's high-contrast sensibilities with a sometimes dazzling yet unsettling color palette). Sergio Leone's Westerns are a strong influence on much of Johnson's work, both visually and musically, and he claims to have watched them extensively in preparation for BRICK.

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY **RIAN JOHNSON**
(2005) 110 MIN.
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY **STEVE YEOLIN**

RELEASED BY **FOCUS FEATURES**
STARRING **JOSEPH GORDON-LEVITT,**
LUKAS HAAS, EMILIE DE RAVIN,
NORA ZEHETNER, NOAH FLEISS,
MATT O'LEARY, AND RICHARD ROUNDTREE

DID YOU KNOW: IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT BRICK, YOU CAN ASK THE WRITER/DIRECTOR HIMSELF! VISIT HIS FORUM AT RCJOHNSO.COM, WHERE JOHNSON PERSONALLY RESPONDS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT ALL OF HIS FILMS (AND OFFERS FREE DOWNLOADS OF HIS SCRIPTS AS WELL). HE MAY NOT STILL BE POSTING FROM THE SAME BEDROOM COMPUTER ON WHICH HE EDITED BRICK, BUT HE'S DEFINITELY STILL SHOWING THAT SAME HANDS-ON APPROACH.

NEXT UP: MARION COTILLARD STARS AS EDITH PIAF IN THE ROLE THAT WON HER AN ACADEMY AWARD AND INTRODUCED HER TO THE WORLD. **LA VIE EN ROSE**, THE TRIUMPHANT AND TRAGIC STORY OF THIS INTERNATIONAL SINGING SENSATION, SCREENS ON **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 AT 7:00 P.M.**