



ESSENTIAL CINEMA

It all began with a list. The Essential 100, announced last year, was an attempt to find new meaning in the ever-present practice of list-making around film. By combining one list forged by our TIFF experts and the results of a wide survey, we sought a canon that reflected the ethos of our organization and its key component parts, especially TIFF Cinematheque and the Toronto International Film Festival®, which are respectively celebrating their 20th and 35th anniversaries this year. It's a bit kooky – with Jean Renoir and George Lucas cuddling up with 1928's *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* atop a list that also includes several films made in the last five years – but it's an honest reflection of the dynamic push-pull between audience and programmer that makes what we do here so interesting.

The Essential Cinema Exhibition is both an extrapolation of and commentary

on this list, transforming it into a gallery-based experience, which we put together with New York-based curator Michael Connor and designers Barr Gilmore and Michel Arcand. It is structured into three principal parts. A *Wunderkammer*, or cabinet of curiosities room, in our main gallery is filled with artifacts of cinema: objects, photos, posters, clips, sound and art that illustrate why these films are iconic. Four new commissions, our first such project since the Festival's 25th Anniversary Preludes in 2000, see filmmakers and artists comment on the idea of the film list. And our Future Projections programme, which is devoted this year to the Essential 100, features installations that directly relate to individual films or filmmakers on the list. As always, Future Projections occurs through the grace of our partners, including galleries and other major public institutions here

in Toronto. It is gratifying to have so much support from our city's cultural leaders as we launch our new home.

Free to the public, the exhibition begins on September 12. End dates for the various works can be found on the pages to follow.

The Essential Cinema film series – featuring interviews, lectures, on-stage talks with some of the medium's greatest thinkers and large-scale concert extravaganzas, not to mention hundreds of film screenings – begins September 23, immediately following the Festival. We are proud to welcome David Cronenberg as our first guest on opening night to talk about his Essential film, *Videodrome*.

■ Noah Cowan