

# The reality of small happenings on display

Last chance to see the *Juntos* photography exhibit by Bernard Plossu, Françoise Nuñez

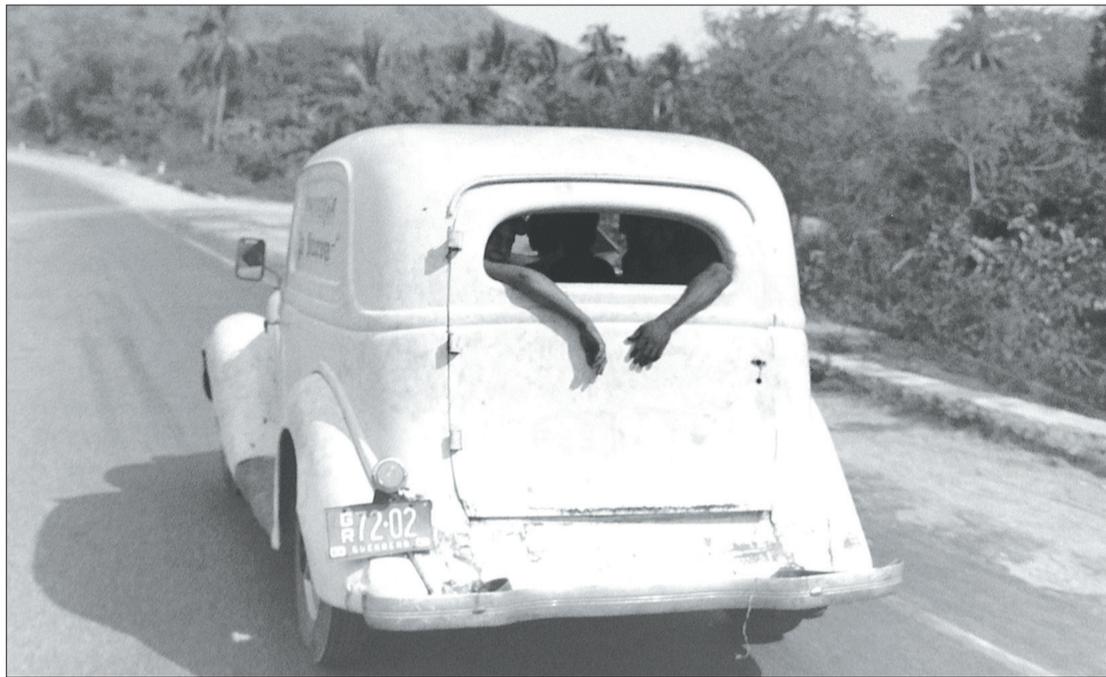
BY MARJAN GROOTHUIS  
FOR THE HERALD

**French photographers Bernard Plossu and Françoise Nuñez** are presenting 25 images each in an exhibition titled *Juntos (Together)*, now on show at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. They are a couple and both have worked as photographers for many years now.

Plossu took his first pictures when he travelled to the Sahara in 1958 and, although still a child at the time, he enjoyed it immensely. Travelling was second nature to him; he was born in Vietnam in 1945, always being aware that the world is a big place. He lived in Mexico between 1965 and 1966 and took lots of photographs, which were later published in the book *Le Voyage mexicain (The Mexican Trip)*.

During an interview with Paula Kupfer from the New York-based Aperture Foundation in October 2014, Plossu said that it's not fine art book, although it is important to him: "It was a book on being 20 and travelling and going anywhere and doing anything. More than an art style, it was a lifestyle. Many young people have told me they travelled with the small edition of *Le voyage mexicain* in their pocket—it was a small paperback. They looked to it as a model."

Plossu has been widely regarded as one of the leading French



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An image from *Juntos*, Bernard Plossu and Françoise Nuñez's exhibit currently on display at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires.

photographers for a long time now and has well over 15 books to his name. Interestingly, he still uses only a 50 mm lens, a very sober vision and still takes his pictures without gimmicks. He also says that he is more interested in the mood of the photographs, and not so much in the composition of the

photographs: "I'm more interested in the non-decisive: the little nothings that may not be very important, apparently, but that are important, in life and in seeing with the camera." And that is something that comes clearly to the fore while viewing the photographs now on display at the Museo Nacional de

Bellas Artes. There is poetry in small happenings, a shapely leg, a certain look, and arms dangling from a car window, two men with hats seen from the back and so on.

Nuñez took up photography in 1975 and is, just like her husband, an avid traveller. The images on show are a tribute to these exten-

sive travels, although some were taken in France as well. A romantic and poetic approach prevails in her work, thus both husband and wife complement each other splendidly. All photographs on display capture the nobility of each and every subject, from very crowded trains to a rainy square and rowing men. And last but not least, the many hues of black and white and notably grey enhance this feeling of being drawn into the picture instead of being a mere spectator.

Still, I cannot help but feel that the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes keeps on treating photography as a not-very-much-loved stepchild: virtually all shows are being held on the not so accessible second floor and most visitors therefore never even make it. But photography is here to stay; it is very much a discipline in its own right and should therefore be paid a rightful tribute. Please don't let that second floor deter you because the works of Plossu and Nuñez really deserve a closer look.

## WHERE AND WHEN

Bernard Plossu/Françoise Nuñez at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (Avenida Libertador 1473). Curated by Adriana Lestido. Open until the end of May. Tuesday to Friday from 12.30pm to 8.30pm, weekends from 9.30am to 8.30pm. Free admission.

# At a middling Cannes fest, Pixar's *Inside Out* is the standout

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**CANNES, France — Thank goodness for Pixar.** The reliably excellent animation studio offered one of the few high points during an otherwise ho-hum Cannes Film Festival yesterday, when the new animated feature *Inside Out* screened at the Grand Theatre Lumière. Directed by Pete Docter, the wildly inventive, deeply felt exploration of the complicated way feelings, memories and dreams inform our personalities won over nearly everyone who packed the elegant main venue at the Grand Palais, bringing the crowd to cheers, tears and more cheers during an exceptionally witty end credits sequence.

*Inside Out* was one of just a few unqualified hits in what most veterans agree is a lacklustre year at Cannes. Continuing a disappointing trend of late, the opening night film was instantly forgettable — in this case the earnest but unremarkable *La Tête Haute* (Standing Tall), a drama about a wayward boy and the bureaucrats who try to save him, directed by actress Emmanuelle Bercot. She appeared a few days later in *Mon Roi* (My King), a highly-anticipated romance from the director Maiwenn, who wowed several viewers here a few years ago with her sprawling, au-



Actress Amy Poehler laughs as Pixar chief creative officer John Lasseter poses before the screening of *Inside Out* in Cannes.

dacious procedural *Polisse*. Unfortunately, *Mon Roi*, which co-stars Vincent Cassel, didn't have nearly the rueful grit or nerve of the earlier film, hewing to a familiar template of longing, loss, passion and recrimination.

Those emotions were deployed with finer craft in *Carol*, which played to rapturous audiences when it made its debut here on Saturday night. An adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's

novel *The Price of Salt* directed by Todd Haynes, the film stars Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara as women embarking on a tentative love affair in New York in the early 1950s. *Carol* has so far been one of the few films in official competition to receive resounding praise from critics.

The documentary *Amy*, a carefully-constructed, emotionally-devastating documentary about the late

singer Amy Winehouse, was shown out of competition, in a special midnight screening, also to nearly universal raves.

By far the most impressive film so far — in or out of competition — has been Laszlo Nemes's extraordinary feature debut *Saul Fia* (Son of Saul), a drama about an Auschwitz prisoner who is determined to give an exterminated boy a Jewish burial. Filmed in an extraordinary series of long, unbroken takes, carefully staged and framed to render Nazi atrocities both obliquely and with unflinching realism, and dominated by a groundbreaking performance by Geza Rohrig, *Son of Saul* re-defines the Holocaust-drama genre, infusing it with new urgency, visual energy and moral meaning.

Not surprisingly, *Son of Saul* has become the mid-festival favourite for the coveted Palme d'Or and, as was also expected, it was acquired — after an all-night bidding war — by Sony Pictures Classics, which will certainly give it the Oscar push it clearly deserves (no word yet on whether that will be in 2015 or 2016).

With the exception of *Carol*, *Amy* and especially *Son of Saul*, very little has stood out in a festival that seems to be coasting along in the mushy middle of good-not-great films.

And then there's *The Sea of Trees*, which received a wave of contemp-

tuous boos when it screened for critics Friday night. A marital melodrama framed by the story of a man contemplating suicide in a vast Japanese forest, *The Sea of Trees* features a determined lead performance from Matthew McConaughey, but finds director Gus Van Sant somewhat at sea himself, as he grapples with a fatally mawkish, sentimental script.

Cannes has become known in years past for the ruthlessness of its audiences, but the boos for *The Sea of Trees* seemed to be directed less at the movie than at a filmmaker who is clearly capable of more discipline and rigor, and at festival programmers who have wasted precious real estate in the competition on a film that belonged, at best, in a sidebar or one-off screening. (That's exactly what they did with Woody Allen's satisfactory but unexceptional *Irrational Man*, starring Joaquin Phoenix as a blocked philosophy professor and Emma Stone as his adoring student; the film is strictly middling Allen, but nonetheless received a two-minute standing ovation at its gala premiere here on Friday.)

For his part, McConaughey was unfazed the next day. "Anyone has as much right to boo as they do to ovate," he said at a press conference following the disastrous screening. In other words? Never you mind — or, as they say on the Croisette, *tant pis*.