CINÉMATHÈQUE PRESENTS...

FIRES ON THE PLAIN (1959)
Directed by Kon Ichikawa

Kon Ichikawa's adaptation of Shohei Ooka's novel Nobi takes place in the Philippines at the end of World War II. The Japanese army is in hasty retreat from the incoming American forces. Among one group of men of men is a soldier named Tamura (Eiji Funakoshi). Suffering from the last stages of tuberculosis, Tamura knows he faces imminent death anyway, and so he is able to resist submitting to the chaos and demoralization that overtake his fellow soldiers (who commit murder, cannibalism, and become insane). But eventually Tamura engages in acts, which bring him one step closer to losing his humanity.

108 min.

STEEL HELMET (1951)
Directed by Samuel Fuller

Zack (Gene Evans) is a gruff U.S. Army sergeant who is the lone survivor of an attack on his outfit in North Korea. Rescued by a kindhearted Korean orphan he dubs Short Round (William Chun), Zack tries to make his way back to friendly territory with the boy as his guide. As they make their way through the Jungle, the encounter a platoon of American soldiers. The group sets out for an abandoned Buddhist temple to try to set up an observation post. Steel Helmet was shot in a mere ten days, with the battle scenes staged in Los Angeles' Griffith Park. The tale of men at war was informed by Fuller's own experiences in the armed forces.

85 min.