

## Jean-Luc Godard season at BFI Southbank, January – March 2016



### Tuesday 15 December 2015, London

BFI Southbank will mount an extensive season dedicated to one of the most innovative film directors in the world, the godfather of the French New Wave **Jean-Luc Godard**, from **Friday 1 January – Wednesday 16 March**; the season will include over 100 examples of his vast and varied output, including feature films, short films, self-portraits, experimental TV productions and a number of rarities. The season will be structured chronologically so audiences can appreciate the evolution of Godard's craft over the past five decades. One of the highlights of the season will be an extended run of the BFI re-release of *Le Mépris*, back in selected cinemas across the UK from **Friday 1 January**. Plus, on **Saturday 16 January** the star of many of Godard's early films and Godard's former wife **Anna Karina**, will introduce a screening of *Le Mépris* (1963), a film said to be about their relationship, and take part in **Q&As** following *Vivre sa vie* (1962) and *Bande à part* (1964), both of which she starred in and will also play on extended run during the season. Karina will also take part in the BFI's regular Screen Epiphanies series, introducing a screening of *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) on **Sunday 17 January**.

### Season event highlights:

Saturday 16 January, 15:10 – SCREENING: *Bande à part* + Q&A with Anna Karina  
 Saturday 16 January, 17:50 – SCREENING: *Le Mépris* + intro with Anna Karina  
 Saturday 16 January, 20:40 – SCREENING: *Vivre sa vie* + Q&A with Anna Karina  
 Sunday 17 January, 12:30 – BFI SCREEN EPIPHANY: *Singin' in the Rain* + intro with Anna Karina  
 Wednesday 6 January, 18:10 – TALK: Laura Mulvey & Michael Witt on Jean-Luc Godard  
 Tuesday 12 January, 20:20 – TALK: '*Le Mépris*' and Godard's Philosophical Cinema  
 Wednesday 13 January, 20:30 – TALK: Jean-Luc Godard as Architect  
 Wednesday 10 February, 18:20 – TALK: Nicole Brenez on Godard as Experimental Filmmaker  
 Monday 22 February, 18:30 – TALK: Albertine Fox on Godard as Sound Artist

Born in 1930, and active as a critic from 1950 before making his first feature *À bout de souffle* in 1960, Jean-Luc Godard is a seminal director who has influenced filmmakers as diverse as Martin Scorsese, Jim Jarmusch, Bernardo Bertolucci and the subject of another BFI Southbank season during January, **Quentin Tarantino**. Godard conceived his semi-improvised, location-shot first feature *À bout de souffle* (1960) – based on a treatment by François Truffaut – as a manifesto for a new type of filmmaking. Drawing on a deep knowledge of film history, he set out to do everything that cinema had done up to that point, but differently. The film won Godard the first of many major awards – The Silver Bear for Best Director at the Berlin Film Festival – and helped establish the French New Wave as a bold new style in filmmaking.

Iconic Nouvelle Vague features being screened in part one of the season during January will include *Pierrot le fou* (1965); stunningly photographed by Raoul Coutard, Godard's tale of 'the last romantic couple' follows Pierrot (Jean-Paul Belmondo) as he abandons the routine of his comfortable Paris existence for adventure on the road with lover Marianne (Anna Karina). Extended run titles will be *Vivre sa vie* (1962), *Bande à part* (1964) and *Le Mépris* (1963). *Vivre sa vie* is a Brechtian social fiction which follows Nana (played by Anna Karina) as she learns how to be a sex worker, and was based on a popular sociological study of contemporary prostitution. *Bande à part* also stars Karina, this time alongside Claude Brasseur and Sami Frey, as an incompetent trio of amateur crooks whose plan to burgle a rich old lady goes tragically wrong. The tone of the film is light and includes two classic examples of the sheer fun of making movies: the infamous Madison dance scene and a sprint through the Louvre. *Le Mépris* is a sumptuously stylish study of a rocky marriage and fraught professional relationships starring Brigitte Bardot and Michel Piccoli. Seen as Godard's most emotionally involving film, it was also his most successful. It was the seventh best performing film at the box office in France in 1963, but it was the one and only time that Godard worked with the backing of an American studio.

Other highlights of the January programme will include screenings of *Le Petit soldat* (1960), at once political thriller, existential drama and love story, Godard's exuberant tribute to the Hollywood musical *Une Femme est une femme* (1961), the romantic sci-fi adventure *Alphaville* (1965), and *Made in USA* (1966), in which Anna Karina stars as a woman attempting to discover who has murdered her lover. There will also be a rare opportunity to see films outside Godard's New Wave oeuvre including *One Plus One (aka Sympathy for the Devil)* (1968), in which Godard followed The Rolling Stones as they recorded their seminal album 'Sympathy for the Devil', *Le Gai savoir* (1968), the structure, essayistic form and first-person narration of which anticipate his later audio-visual essays, and *Vent d'est* (1969, an experiment in collective filmmaking which began as a 'Marxist western' and ultimately became a manifesto for the Dziga Vertov Group's project to 'make political films politically.'

Part two of the season in February covers a period of extraordinary diversity and radical changes in Godard's methods and artistic output. Following collaborations with Jean-Pierre Gorin including *Lotte in Italia* (1970), *Vladimir et Rosa* (1970), *Tout va bien* (1972) and *Letter to Jane* (1972), Godard embarked on the most significant and long-lasting creative partnership in his career. Working with his current partner Anne-Marie Miéville, not only did his political philosophy take a new turn – focusing less on abstract revolutionary principles and more on the everyday experiences of life under capitalism – but also the very tools of his art changed. Godard and Miéville enthusiastically embraced video technology as a fresh way of seeing the world and of thinking with images and sounds. Films such as *Numéro deux* (1975) and *Comment ça va?* (1976) saw Godard and Miéville combine film and video techniques to produce a wide-ranging essay that announces the key themes of their subsequent work, including the sexual politics of work and the family and the ideological domination of the mass media.

There will be a rare opportunity to see Godard's experiments with television in the late 1970s - **Six fois deux** (1976) was a six part series which used the screen less as a window than as a blackboard for the analysis of contemporary communication processes, often using a video pen to write directly over the imagery; the ambitious a twelve part series **France tour détour deux enfants** (1979) was a poetic study on childhood, school, TV, French language, and society. But Godard did not abandon cinema, he simply reinvigorated it with this new audiovisual dialogue, which exploded into life in the 80s with a series of brilliant features that are as richly suggestive and as sensuously captivating as anything he produced in the 60s. Features from the 1980s being screened in the season will include **Passion** (1982) starring Isabelle Huppert and Jerzy Radziwilowicz, a lateral take on the *Carmen* story **First Name: Carmen** (1983), a return to noir for the first time since *Made in USA* **Détective** (1985) and **King Lear** (1987), which Godard presented as a 'study' of the source material, and features William Shakespeare Jr. the Fifth (Peter Sellars) on the trail of traces of his ancestor's work in an age of cultural amnesia.

The concluding month of the retrospective in March will focus on Godard's historical films and videos, and the astonishing creativity and vitality of his most recent work. Godard devoted considerable time in the 1990s to completing **Histoire(s) du cinéma** (1998), his landmark eight-part study of cinema history, and of the history of the twentieth century through cinema. Other projects during the 1990s included Godard's response to the conflict in ex-Yugoslavia via a number of works including **For Ever Mozart** (1996) and **Hail, Sarajevo** (1993), and Godard explored the new Europe of the early 1990s in **Germany Year 90 Nine Zero** (1991). In 1995, as part of the cinema centenary celebrations, the BFI commissioned **Two Times 50 Years of French Cinema** (1995), a short history of French cinema, which is by turn melancholic and uplifting, nostalgic and yet inventive.

**JLG/JLG: December Self-Portrait** (1995) was a unique spin on the autobiographical genre, in which Godard composed a fascinating self-portrait of the artist at work in his mid-sixties. The season will also include a **Self-Portraiture Programme**; Godard has appeared in many of his own films throughout his career, sometimes just as a voice, sometimes as an actor playing a role, but most often as himself. This programme will include a number of such appearances including **Camera-Eye** (1967), **Farewell to the TNS** (1996) and **It Was When** (2010). Since 2000, besides producing numerous further video essays and feature films, including **In Praise of Love** (2001), **Our Music** (2004) and **Film socialisme** (2010), Godard staged a major exhibition at the Pompidou Centre in 2006, and as his recent 3D feature **Adieu au langage** (2014) demonstrates, he remains at the age of 85 as vital, inventive and unpredictable a creative force as ever.

#### **ANNA KARINA IS AVAILABLE FOR SELECTED INTERVIEWS**

The season is co-curated by **Michael Witt**, Professor of Cinema at the University of Roehampton and author of *Jean-Luc Godard, Cinema Historian*, and **Michael Temple**, Reader in Film and Media at Birkbeck and co-editor of several books on Godard.

On **21 March**, the BFI will bring **Bande à Part** (1964) to Blu-ray for the first time. This essential release will feature a specially commissioned video interview with **Anna Karina**, an interview with **Quentin Tarantino** on the famous dance sequence, and an interview with cinematographer **Raoul Coutard**.

**STUDIOCANAL** will release **Jean-Luc Godard: The Essential Collection** Blu-Ray boxset on February 1. This new five disc collection includes **Breathless**, **Le Mépris**, **Pierrot le fou**, **Alphaville** and **Une femme est une femme** plus over six hours of extras material including new interviews with **Anna Karina** and a booklet featuring essays on each film from critics and directors.

**– ENDS –**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**FULL LISTINGS FOR THE JEAN-LUC GODARD SEASON ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE HERE:**

<http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-southbank-jean-luc-godard-season-complete-listings-2015-12-18.pdf>

**IN CONVERSATIONS, EVENTS AND TALKS:**

**Bande à part + Q&A with Anna Karina**

*France 1964. Dir Jean-Luc Godard. With Claude Brasseur, Anna Karina, Sami Frey. 96min. Digital. EST. PG. A BFI release*

This energetic adaptation of pulp fiction writer Dolores Hitchens' *Fool's Gold* follows the fortunes of an incompetent trio of amateur crooks whose plans to burgle a rich old lady go tragically wrong. But the tone is light and the film includes two classic examples of the sheer fun of making movies: the Madison dance scene and the sprint through the Louvre.

**SAT 16 JAN 15:10 NFT1**

**Le Mépris Contempt + Introduction with Anna Karina**

*France-Italy 1963. Dir Jean-Luc Godard. With Brigitte Bardot, Michel Piccoli, Jack Palance, Fritz Lang. 103min. Digital. EST. 15. A BFI release*

A sumptuously stylish study of a rocky marriage and fraught professional relationships, Godard's unusually straightforward adaptation of a novel by Moravia is also his most hauntingly beautiful film. A scriptwriter (Piccoli) adapting Homer's *Odyssey* is torn between the demands of a philistine producer (Palance), his loyalty to the director (Lang) and his own self-respect; to make matters worse, his indecision is getting to his wife (Bardot)... Making the most of Raoul Coutard's luscious 'Scope images and Georges Delerue's aching lovely score, Godard ensures that we care about this troubled couple even as he illuminates, with incisive wit, the corrosive compromises often inherent in filmmaking. A monumental achievement which combines the classical with the radical.

**SAT 16 JAN 17:50 NFT1**

**Vivre sa vie + Q&A with Anna Karina**

*France 1962. Dir Jean-Luc Godard. With Anna Karina, Peter Kassovitz, Sady Rebbot. 83min. Digital. EST. 15. A BFI release*

Based on a popular sociological study of contemporary prostitution, this Brechtian social fiction follows Nana (Karina) as she learns how to become a sex worker. Beautifully composed and featuring one of Karina's greatest performances, the film introduces some of Godard's key themes: work and sex, the situation of women, and the invisible suffering of the emerging consumer society.

**SAT 16 JAN 20:40 NFT1**

**BFI Screen Epiphanies in partnership with American Express: Anna Karina introduces Singin' in the Rain**

*USA 1952. Dir Stanley Donen, Gene Kelly. With Gene Kelly, Donald O'Connor, Debbie Reynolds, Cyd Charisse. 102min. Digital. U*

Actress, director and writer Anna Karina (*Vivre Sa Vie*, *Pierrot le Fou*, *Anna*) joins us to celebrate BFI Southbank's Jean-Luc Godard season and to discuss one of the films that has been inspirational to her. *Singin' in the Rain*'s tagline was 'what a glorious feeling' and that's exactly what it gives you. An all-singing, all-dancing classic film about making a film, set on a silent film production in 1927. With hit songs such as 'Make 'Em Laugh', 'Good Morning' and the title song 'Singin' in the Rain' it's guaranteed to lift your spirits.

**SUN 17 JAN 12:30 NFT1**

### **Laura Mulvey and Michael Witt on Jean-Luc Godard**

To introduce our Jean-Luc Godard season, filmmaker and theorist Laura Mulvey (author of *Visual and Other Pleasures* and *Death 24x a Second*) joins season co-curator Michael Witt for an in-depth conversation, richly illustrated with clips. Looking at Godard's 60-year artistic career, they will present ideas, issues, questions and much food for thought as our three-month retrospective unfolds.

*Tickets £6.50*

**WED 6 JAN 18:10 NFT1**

### **'Le Mépris' and Godard's Philosophical Cinema**

*TRT 75min*

In the latest of our regular discussion series, which looks at film through a philosophical lens, we consider Godard's *Le Mépris* as a blistering critique of cinema as an industry, and as a statement of artistic purpose. We'll explore Godard's contempt for commerce and the way he strives for a cinema that does more than simply tell stories and make money. Join film philosophy scholars Lucy Bolton, William Brown, and John Mullarkey to bear witness to Godard's search for an aesthetic and political cinema, for a cinema that is – in short – philosophical.

*Tickets £6.50, or free to ticketholders of Le Mépris on Tue 12 Jan at 18:10. Due to limited capacity, tickets should be booked in advance via the box office.*

**TUE 12 JAN 20:20 BLUE ROOM**

### **Jean-Luc Godard as Architect**

*TRT 90min*

In this illustrated talk, writer and lecturer Richard Martin (author of *The Architecture of David Lynch*) surveys the ways that Jean-Luc Godard uses rooms, buildings, roads and landscapes in his films – from the stunning cliff-top villa in *Le Mépris* to the dystopian spaces of *Alphaville* and the epic traffic jams of *Weekend*. Martin will also consider the complex narrative architecture of Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinéma*.

*Tickets £6.50*

*In association with:*



**WED 13 JAN 20:30 BFI REUBEN LIBRARY**

### **Jean-Luc Godard: Film Language, Narrative, Politics**

Join Ginette Vincendeau and her colleagues from King's College London for a nine-week illustrated course to complement our Godard retrospective. We'll take a deeper look at his place in the French New Wave, his relation to actors, film criticism and film history, the essay film, the society and politics that informed Godard's filmmaking, his preoccupation with film language and his exploration of TV and new media. Beginners and aficionados welcome.

*£120.00*

**THURSDAYS FROM 14 JAN – 10 MAR 18:30-20:30 STUDIO**

### **Nicole Brenez on Godard as Experimental Filmmaker**

*TRT 90min*

Jean-Luc Godard's creative trajectory is characterised by increasing formal and structural experimentation, yet he's rarely considered an 'experimental filmmaker.' In this talk, leading film theorist and curator Nicole Brenez will consider his work from the 1970s onwards within a wider artistic context marked by video art pioneers such as Peter Whitehead, Dan Sandin, Richard Serra and the Videofreex collective.

*Tickets £6.50*

**WED 10 FEB 18:20 NFT3**

## **Albertine Fox on Godard as Sound Artist**

*TRT 90min*

Sound and music occupy a hugely important position at the heart of Jean-Luc Godard's artistic practice, and part two of our retrospective sees the beginning of a daring and complex phase of sound design in his cinematic oeuvre – to the extent that we may consider him as much a sonic as a visual artist. In this talk, academic Albertine Fox will consider the way Godard's sound design in the 1980s prompted us to rethink how we listen to, see, talk and write about film.

*Tickets £6.50*

**MON 22 FEB 18:30 BFI REUBEN LIBRARY**

### **About the BFI**

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI Southbank is open to all. BFI members are entitled to a discount on all tickets. BFI Southbank Box Office tel: 020 7928 3232. Unless otherwise stated tickets are £11.00, concs £8.50 Members pay £1.50 less on any ticket - [www.bfi.org.uk/southbank](http://www.bfi.org.uk/southbank)

Young people aged 25 and under can buy last minute tickets for just £3, 45 minutes before the start of screenings and events, subject to availability - <http://www.bfi.org.uk/25-and-under>

**Tickets for FREE screenings and events must be booked in advance by calling the Box Office to avoid disappointment**

### **BFI Shop**

The BFI Shop is stocked and staffed by BFI experts with over 1,200 book titles and 1,000 DVDs to choose from, including hundreds of acclaimed books and DVDs produced by the BFI.

### **The benugo bar & kitchen**

Eat, drink and be merry in panoramic daylight. benugo's décor is contemporary, brightly lit and playful with a lounge space, bar and dining area. The place to network, hang out, unpack a film, savour the best of Modern British or sip on a cocktail.

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.

**\*\*\* PICTURE DESK \*\*\***

**A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Southbank screenings can be found at [www.image.net](http://www.image.net) under BFI / BFI Southbank / Southbank 2016 / January / Jean-Luc Godard**