



EROTICA FROM THE ARCHIVES! THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE



Left to Right: *The Showman* (BFI, 1970), *Stranger in the City* (BFI, 1961)
Burlesque Queen (BFI, 1961) and *From Stags to Stardust* (BFI, 1977)

On Friday 2nd December 2016 the BFI announces a new addition to the Britain on Film collection on BFI Player: **The Pleasure Principle** is a collection of newly digitised films dating from 1896 to the early years of the 21st century. This collection offers a guide to illicit celluloid pleasures, from teasing Victorian views of corsets and petticoats to artistic slow motion nudity to Soho's finest cheesecake pin-ups captured on 8mm film in the 1950s and 60s, as well as a selection of taboo-breaking dramas and documentaries. The collection is part of the BFI's five-year **Britain on Film** project to digitise, and make available online, 10,000 films, from the BFI National Archive and the UK's national and regional film archives, by 2017 <http://player.bfi.org.uk/collections/the-pleasure-principle/>.

Erotic films have always played a part in the history and development of cinema. Early filmmakers experimented with just how much they could get away with and audiences were always keen to see just a little more. Many of these films were distributed outside of traditional cinemas, whether privately shown as gentlemen's 'smokers' in private clubs, discreetly presented in cigarette-fogged cellars and backrooms, or despatched under plain

brown wrapper to private homes for personal projection in the decades before the home video revolution. All of the titles in this collection originated on film.

These films have been digitised as part of the on-going Britain on Film project whereby will have completed 10,000 films made newly available on-line by the end of 2017, in collaboration with 13 national and regional archives.

With filmmakers playing cat and mouse with the censors - and sometimes the police – the sorts of films revealed in *The Pleasure Principle* have often had a precarious existence. They owe their very survival to the enthusiasm of private collectors and archivists. Only now is this significant part of cinema history becoming the subject of serious study. The collection offers up insights into changing manners and morals across the decades, and a view of the fascinating battles of filmmakers and businessmen for freedom to reveal all (or nearly all) on screen.

The selection includes the following titles, and will be added to and completed during the next few weeks.

Action in Slow Motion (1943)

"Expressly for assistance to artists and students": a female nude cavorts innocently at the seaside in this enigmatic 1940s film, which accidentally reveals much about the attitudes of a distant era.

Burlesque Queen (1961)

Tassel-spinning showgirl Tina stars in this rare 60s British stage burlesque showreel, which conjures the atmosphere of a smoky Soho cellar bar.

Victorian Lady in Her Boudoir (1896)

A treat for Victorian voyeurs - and what may well be Britain's oldest erotic film.

Xcitement! (1960)

Glamour legend Pamela Green - who has a memorable cameo in Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (released in the same year) - reveals all in a key '60s striptease collaboration with prolific adult-auteur George Harrison Marks.

Off the Shoulder (1951)

The erotic allure of the uncovered shoulder is the draw in this strange silent short, possibly the work of an (unknown) amateur filmmaker.

Vampire (1964)

Soho 'glamour' filmmaker George Harrison Marks plays a girl-hungry Count Dracula III in this strange gothic striptease short.

Dream Doll (1979)

A relationship liable to blow up at any moment is at the heart of this surprisingly tender Anglo-Croatian animated short, charting a man's romance with an inflatable sex doll.

The Irresponsibles (1926)

This striking female-focused silent drama, directed by the prodigious Mary Field (arguably Britain's most important female filmmaker), was intended to raise awareness of the perils of sexually transmitted diseases.

The Lover (1963)

A highly-charged exploration of infidelity, eroticism and cruelty from the acid pen of Harold Pinter and starring his then wife and muse Vivien Merchant.

Fiona Richmond at her Pleasure (1970)

The celebrity adult actress, model and trailblazer of sexual liberation is interviewed (naked, naturally) about her work and attitudes.

(from South West Film and Television Archive)

Exeter School of Striptease (1970)

Westward TV reporter Andy Price learns about the art of exotic dance at Devon's first striptease school.

(from South West Film and Television Archive)

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Images are available via – www.image.net | BFI > Britain on Film > 2016> Pleasure Principle

ABOUT BRITAIN ON FILM AND UNLOCKING FILM HERITAGE

Britain on Film is one of the largest and most complex archival projects ever undertaken and is part of the BFI's Unlocking Film Heritage programme (2013-17). Unlocking film heritage for everyone in the UK to enjoy is a key strategic priority for the BFI, and Britain on Film is the public launch of a vast programme of work, which has been ongoing for over three years. Bringing together a partnership with Regional and National Film Archives and rights holder collections across the UK, this work has included a sophisticated programme of data capture, cataloguing, copying to archival standards, meticulous preservation of original materials, thorough searching of archives across the country, new state-of-the-art equipment and digital storage facilities and the transfer of films to the BFI's online video platform, BFI Player.

Unlocking Film Heritage and Britain on Film are thanks to £15 million funding from the National Lottery and the additional support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

BRITAIN ON FILM ONLINE ELSEWHERE

- Selections from Britain On Film will also be hosted on the BFI's YouTube channel, Facebook and Twitter, so audiences can find and experience it in the easiest way possible
- BFI and regional and national film archive curators will be writing features highlighting important films and themes on the BFI website. Their expertise will add context and provide new ways in for the British public to find films that illuminate the places they know and love
- Join the conversation at **#BritainOnFilm**

Britain on Film is a project from the BFI National Archive and the UK's Regional and National Film Archives

ABOUT THE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVES

The English Regional Film Archives and other National Film Archives (listed below) hold significant collections of film and video material specifically relevant to their regions or hold dedicated collections such as Imperial War Museums, preserved in specialised storage facilities and made widely available for education, research, communities and the wider public.

East Anglian Film Archive
Imperial War Museums
London's Screen Archives
Media Archive for Central England at the University of Lincoln
North East Film Archive
North West Film Archive at Manchester Metropolitan University
Northern Ireland Screen Digital Film Archive
Moving Image Archive, National Library of Scotland
Screen Archive South East
South West Film & Television Archive
National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales
Wessex Film and Sound Archive
Yorkshire Film Archive

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 is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

ABOUT THE BFI NATIONAL ARCHIVE

The BFI National Archive was founded in 1935 and has grown to become the one of the largest and most important collections of film and television in the world with over 180,000 films and 750,000 television programmes. For over 80 years the BFI has been an international leader in film preservation and guardian of Britain's unparalleled film and TV heritage. The BFI is an innovator in presenting films to audiences in new and dynamic ways, from cinemas to film festivals, outdoor events to online video-on-demand. At the heart of all its activities is the BFI's central aim to ensure that everyone in the UK has access to the widest possible range of film and their own film heritage.

That heritage includes all time great British directors Alfred Hitchcock, David Lean and Powell and Pressburger; and the rich vein of documentary filmmaking, in which Britain led the world, including the lyrical work of Humphrey Jennings. The archive also boasts a significant collection of filmmakers' papers as well as extensive stills, posters and production and costume designs along with original scripts, press books and related ephemera.

Expert teams undertake the time-consuming and complex task of restoring films at the BFI John Paul Getty Jr Conservation Centre in Hertfordshire. The BFI's most precious film materials are kept in optimum conditions in the world-leading Master Film Store in Warwickshire.

ABOUT BFI PLAYER

BFI Player is a ground-breaking video on demand service which offers a uniquely diverse range of films, from the latest releases to the rarest silent cinema classics, giving UK audiences a rich and rewarding digital film experience. The Britain on Film collections are accessible through the BFI Player. <http://player.bfi.org.uk/britain-on-film>



ABOUT THE ESMÉE FAIRBAIRN FOUNDATION

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation aims to improve the quality of life for people and communities throughout the UK both now and in the future. We do this by funding the charitable work of organisations with the ideas and ability to achieve positive change. We are happy to be supporting Britain on Film – a significant, UK-wide film archive project, which will make titles from the BFI National Archive and national and regional screen archives available to the British public, offering a unique opportunity for insight and reflection on places, communities and histories throughout the UK.

The Foundation is one of the largest independent grant-makers in the UK. We make grants of £30 - £35 million annually towards a wide range of work within the arts, children and young people, the environment and social change. We also operate a £26 million Finance Fund which invests in organisations that aim to deliver both a financial return and a social benefit.

www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

