

GIRLFRIENDS

Thu 1 Feb – Tue 20 Mar, BFI Southbank



A season of films by and about women, celebrating female friendship in all its forms, including *BEACHES*, *THE WOMEN*, *NINE TO FIVE* and *DAISIES*

Wednesday 20 December 2017, London.

The BFI today announces a season of films celebrating the joys and complexities of female friendships. **GIRLFRIENDS** will run at **BFI Southbank** from **Thursday 1 February – Tuesday 20 March** and will include features and shorts from around the world, from the silent era to today. The season showcases portraits of women who are actually three-dimensional and not defined solely by their relationship to men; from the hedonist heroines of Vera Chytilová's *Daisies* (1966) and the schoolgirl friendship depicted in Jane Campion's rarely-seen TV movie *2 Friends* (1986), to the endlessly quotable titular characters of *Romy and Michele's High School Reunion* (David Mirkin, 1997), these are films that would definitely pass the Bechdel test. With recent events putting gender inequality and issues of female representation into stark focus, this season is a timely celebration of sisterhood, with films that modern woman will relate to. Around twenty features will be screened, most of which will be paired with a short film by an up-and-coming woman filmmaker. More than half the films in the season are directed by women, including **Sally Potter**, **Nicole Holofcener**, **Claudia Weill** and Hollywood pioneer **Dorothy Arzner**, while almost all of them have a female scriptwriter, presenting audiences with a wealth of female talent both behind and in front of the camera. There will also be a tie-in collection on BFI Player with more than 20 features and shorts on offer, including critically acclaimed Palestinian film *In Between* (Maysaloun Hamoud, 2016), Sean Baker's compassionate and frenetic tale of two transgender sex workers *Tangerine* (2015) and Japanese film *Happy Hour* (Ryusuke Hamaguchi, 2015), which was a hit on the festival circuit in 2015.

The critically-acclaimed television show *Parks and Recreation* has produced one of the best female characters in recent years in the form of Leslie Knope (played by Amy Poehler); Knope was the creator and champion of 'Galentine's Day', now an annual celebration of gal pals, and this Galentine's Day (**Tuesday 13 February**) BFI Southbank will invite girlfriends everywhere to honour the cult hit *Romy and Michele's High School Reunion* (David Mirkin, 1997). A special screening of the film, which follows its Valley-girl heroes Romy and Michelle to their ten year high school reunion, will be followed by a **Skype Q&A with screenwriter Robin Schiff** and an unmissable 90s **Prom Party**. Other events in February will include a discussion on Sally Potter's feminist classic *The Gold Diggers* (1983), and a six week evening course investigating the changing culture around women's filmmaking called *Women's Film: Changing the Guard*. In March there will be special event exploring girlfriends on television – **Thank You for Being a Friend** on **Saturday 3 March** will look at shows which feature honest, complex and hilarious portrayals of female friendship including *Girls*, *Broad City*, *Fleabag*, *Insecure* and *Chewing Gum*.

On **Sunday 4 February**, as part of BFI Southbank's regular **SILENT CINEMA** strand, audiences can get acquainted with the female double acts of the silent and early cinema eras that were ripping up the

rulebook and giving Laurel and Hardy a run for their money; **Early Female Comedy Double Acts** will be a compilation of comedies that celebrate the overlooked damsels of destruction like Anita Garvin and Marion Byron and the Tilly Girls. **Dance Girl Dance** (Dorothy Arzner, 1940) is a realistic portrait of ambitious, strong-willed women, and of female friendship and rivalry, which is made all the more remarkable and nuanced for being directed by the pioneering Dorothy Arzner, one of only two female directors working in Hollywood's Golden Age. Simone de Beauvoir called **The Girls** (Mai Zetterling, 1968) 'the best movie ever made by a woman' in which three actress friends realise that their relationships with men leave a lot to be desired.

Also screening in February will be **Come Back to the 5 & Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean** (Robert Altman, 1982) which sees old friends and members of a James Dean fan club reunite 20 years after his death; **Muriel's Wedding** (PJ Hogan, 1994) about a young woman who dreams of getting married while listening to ABBA songs on repeat; and **Me Without You** (Sandra Goldbacher, 2001), a nuanced portrait of a friendship between quiet, intellectual Holly (Michelle Williams) and free-spirited Marina (Anna Friel), tracking their relationship from their teenage years in 1973 to adulthood in 2001.

The March programme will kick off with a pair of films scripted by the brilliant Anita Loos – **The Women** (George Cukor, 1939) and **Gentlemen Prefer Blondes** (Howard Hawks, 1953). Loos' daring script for **The Women** is adapted from the play by Clare Boothe Luce about a group of women attaching and detaching themselves from men. The women have the power – there are no dumb blondes or doormats here. Venomous in its comedy, the performances of all the stars are on hysterical top-form. **Gentlemen Prefer Blondes** meanwhile satirises the commercially endorsed notion of romantic love and American consumerism through two highly intelligent and sexually domineering women; Marilyn Monroe's Lorelei Lee, the gold-digger, and Jane Russell's Dorothy Shaw, the man-eater.

Claudia Weill's revolutionary Manhattan-set indie **Girlfriends** (1978) acclaimed by the likes of Greta Gerwig and Lena Dunham, fuses comedy and drama and puts two twenty-something women centre stage. **2 Friends** (Jane Campion, 1986) is a charming and devastating portrait of two schoolgirls' fading friendship. Shot on 16mm for Australian TV, Campion's remarkable but little-seen feature debut is alive to the boredom and insecurities of adolescence and the pressures of family life. Also screening will be documentary **Martha and Niki** (Tora Mårtens, 2016) – in 2010 Martha and Niki took part in and won the biggest international Street Dance Competition in Paris, becoming the first women World Champions in Hip Hop. This documentary, which places their friendship at the core of the film, follows the young women as they journey to New York to compete further, while grappling with their cultural roots and heritage.

Eighties classic **Nine to Five** (Colin Higgins, 1980) is undoubtedly the most glorious feminist revenge comedy of the era; three ambitious secretaries played by Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin and Dolly Parton band together to banish their egotistical and lecherous office overlord from their lives. Tearjerker **Beaches** (Garry Marshall, 1988) starring Barbara Hershey and Bette Midler, confirmed Midler as a bona-fide star of film and music with the song *The Wind Beneath My Wings*; the film charts a friendship spanning 35 years which, despite times of distance, always sees the friends turn to one other for support in tough times. **Now and Then** (Lesli Linka Glatter, 1995) is about four childhood friends who made a pact in 1970 to always be there for each other. Twenty years later, the now estranged friends reunite in their hometown to reminisce over the summer that defined their friendship; **Now and Then** boasts a brilliant 90s cast including Melanie Griffiths, Demi Moore, Rosie O'Donnell, Thora Birch and Christina Ricci. Drew Barrymore stars in **Poison Ivy** (Katt Shea, 1992) as the cool, edgy, and wicked smart Ivy, who draws the attention of a self-deprecating teen, who spends her days avoiding her wealthy-but-sleazy dad and her ailing mother. Her friendship with Ivy pushes

her to do the things she's always wanted to do - until she starts to suspect that there's an ulterior motive to Ivy's friendship.

Vera Chytilová's *Daisies* (1966) sees two self-confessed hedonists wreak havoc across a range of official gatherings creating confusion and chaos. The energetic female exuberance and rebellion against societal and gender conformity by the two women together is a sheer joy to behold. Meanwhile two naïve Northerners new to swinging London become embroiled in one riotous escapade after another in *Smashing Time* (Desmond Davis, 1967), a little-seen cult romp starring Lynn Redgrave and Rita Tushingham. The critically acclaimed but rarely screened directorial debut from Nicole Holofcener (*Enough Said*) *Walking and Talking* (1996) stars Catherine Keener and Anne Heche as childhood friends whose relationship is strained when Laura (Heche) gets engaged. Completing the programme, and clocking in at just over 5 hours, *Happy Hour* (Ryusuke Hamaguchi, 2015) builds a refreshingly modern and emotionally astute portrait of the lives of a group of thirty-something friends living in Kobe, Japan.

Most of the films screening in **GIRLFRIENDS** will be paired with a short film, many of which have been directed by an up-and-coming female filmmaker. Shorts will include *Tower XYZ* (Ayo Akingbade, 2016), a succinct short tackling gentrification and social cleansing in Britain; *Ice Fever* (Sophie Malpas, 2017) in which the audience enters the weird and wonderful secret world of an ice lolly disco; *Fan Girl* (Kate Herron, 2015) about a group of super fans who break into the house of a faded 90s pop star; and *Ackee and Saltfish* (Cecile Emeke, 2014) about two friends hanging out in East London on a sunny day.

– ENDS –

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SEASON LISTINGS:

SCREENING IN FEBRUARY:

Galentine's Day: Romy and Michele's High School Reunion + Skype Q&A with screenwriter Robin Schiff + Prom Party in the Blue Room* (USA 1997. Dir David Mirkin. With Mira Sorvino, Lisa Kudrow, Alan Cumming, Janeane Garofalo. 92min. Digital. 15)

+ *Cosmic Bowling* (USA 2017. Dirs Emily Berge, Spencer Thielmann. 15min)

TUE 13 FEB 18:15 NFT1* / SAT 17 FEB 20:45 NFT3

Dance Girl Dance (USA 1940. Dir Dorothy Arzner. With Maureen O'Hara, Lucille Ball, Louis Hayward. 90min. 35mm. PG)

+ *Joie de vivre* (France 1934. Dirs Anthony Gross, Courtland Hector Hoppin. 9min)

SAT 24 FEB 14:30 NFT1 / MON 26 FEB 18:20 NFT2

The Girls (aka Flickorna) (Sweden 1968. Dir Mai Zetterling. With Bibi Andersson, Harriet Andersson, Gunnel Lindblom. 100min. 35mm. EST. 15)

+ **Tower XYZ** (UK 2016. Dir Ayo Akingbade. 3min)

THU 1 FEB 18:20 NFT2 / SUN 4 FEB 19:50 NFT2

Muriel's Wedding (Australia-France 1994. Dir PJ Hogan. With Toni Collette, Rachel Griffiths, Sophie Lee, Jeanie Drynan. 105min. 35mm. 15)

+ **Ice Fever** (UK 2017. Dir Sophie Malpas. 2min)

SAT 10 FEB 18:10 NFT2 / WED 28 FEB 20:50 NFT3

Come Back to the 5 & Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean (USA 1982. Dir Robert Altman. With Cher, Karen Black, Sandy Dennis, Kathy Bates. 109min. 35mm. 15)

+ **Fan Girl** (UK 2015. Dir Kate Herron. 16min)

SAT 10 FEB 20:30 NFT2 / FRI 16 FEB 18:10 NFT2

Me Without You (UK-Germany 2001. Dir Sandra Goldbacher. With Anna Friel, Michelle Williams, Ella Jones. 107min. Digital. 15)

+ **Bulldogs** (UK 2017. Dir Zara Sands. 3min)

SAT 17 FEB 18:00 NFT3 / TUE 20 FEB 20:40 NFT2

Also available on **BFIPLAYER**

Double Trouble: Early Female Comedy Double Acts

TRT c.90min. With live piano accompaniment

SUN 4 FEB 15:30 NFT1

The Gold Diggers (UK 1983. Dir Sally Potter. With George Antoni, Julie Christie, Cassandra Colson. 89min. Digital. U)

MON 5 FEB 18:20 NFT3

Also available on **BFIPLAYER**

The Experimenta Salon: The Gold Diggers

TRT 75min. Free to ticket holders of The Gold Diggers (to be booked via box office due to capacity), otherwise £6.50.

MON 5 FEB 20:10 LIBRARY

BFI Course: Women's Film: Changing the Guard

Presented by Helen De Witt, film programmer and lecturer. Course fee £72, concs £60

EVERY TUE FROM 6 FEB – 13 MAR 18:30 – 20:30

SCREENING IN MARCH:

Martha and Niki (Sweden 2016. Dir Tora Mårtens. With Martha Nabwire, Nikki Tsaposs. Digital. 90min)

+ **Danielle** (Bellinda Zhawi, 2017)

DATES IN MARCH TBC

Beaches (US 1988. Dir Garry Marshall. With Bette Midler, Barbara Hershey. 123min)

+ **Canned** (Kirsty Robison-Ward, 2017)

DATES IN MARCH TBC

Walking and Talking (US 1996. Dir Nicole Holofcener. With Catherine Keener, Anne Heche. 86min)

+ **Beneath the Surface** (Yero Timi-Biu, Jennifer Ashman, 2017)

DATES IN MARCH TBC

Now and Then (US 1995. Dir Lesli Linka Glatter. With Demi Moore, Christina Ricci, Thora Birch, Gaby Hoffman, Ashleigh Aston Moore. 100min)

+ **Crystal Lake** (Jennifer Reeder, 2015)

DATES IN MARCH TBC

Poison Ivy (US 1992. Dir Katt Shea. With Drew Barrymore, Sara Gilbert, Tom Skerritt. 90min)

+ **Rainbow Party** (Eva Sigurdardottir, 2015)

DATES IN MARCH TBC

The Women (USA 1939. Dir George Cukor. With Norma Shearer, Joan Crawford, Rosalind Russell. 133 min)

+ **Pinky** (Roja Gashtili and Julia Lerman, 2016)

DATES IN MARCH TBC

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (USA, 1953. Dir Howard Hawks. With Marilyn Monroe, Jane Russell, James Coburn. 92 min)

+ **Elles** (Joanna Quinn, 1992)

DATES IN MARCH TBC

Daisies (Czech Republic 1966. Dir Vera Chytilová. With Ivana Karbanova, Jitka Cerhova, Marie Ceskova. 74 min)

+ **She Wanted Green Lawns** (UK 1989. Dir Sarah Turner. 4 min)

DATES IN MARCH TBC

Girlfriends (USA 1978. Dir Claudia Weill. With Melanie Mayron, Anita Skinner, Christopher Guest. 88 min. 15)

+ **Ackee and Saltfish** (UK 2014. Dir Cecile Emeke. 15min)

DATES IN MARCH TBC

2 Friends (Australia 1986. Dir Jane Campion. With Emma Coles. Kris Bidenko. Kris McQuade. 76 min. 12)

+ **Reaching** (UK 2017. Dir Sophia Yuet See. 2min)

DATES IN MARCH TBC

Nine to Five (USA 1980. Dir Colin Higgins. With Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin, Dolly Parton. 105 min. 15)

+ **Ode to fuckboi** (UK 2017. Dir Saabeah Theos and Harry Lindley. 5 min)

DATES IN MARCH TBC

Happy Hour + introduction by Kate Taylor and Pascale Moyse (Japan 2015. Dir Ryusuke Hamaguchi. With Rira Kawamura, Hazuki Kikuchi, Maiko Mihara, Sachie Tanaka. 317 min)

DATES IN MARCH TBC

Projecting the Archive: Smashing Time + introduction by Melanie Williams (UK 1967. Dir Desmond Davis. With Lynn Redgrave, Rita Tushingham, Michael York)

DATES IN MARCH TBC

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.

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 £12.10, concs £9.70 including Gift Aid donation. Members pay £2.00 less on any ticket - 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 under BFI / BFI Southbank / 2018 / Feb / Girlfriends