

Revolution In Realism: The New Romanian Cinema



Clockwise from top left: *Stuff and Dough*, *Crulic – The Path to Beyond*, *Child's Pose*, *Aferim!*

Month long season at BFI Southbank, June 2016

KEY EVENTS:

- MON 13 JUNE, 20:30 – Q&A: *Cristi Puiu in Conversation* / Onstage: Director Cristi Puiu
- TUE 28 JUNE, 18:10 – PANEL DISCUSSION: *Romania's New Cinema – How the Filmmakers See It* / Onstage: Directors Anca Damian, Tudor Giurgiu and Radu Muntean
- TUE 7 JUNE, 18:00 – SCREENING AND Q&A: *Aferim!* (Radu Jude, 2015) / Onstage: Director Radu Jude (via skype), actor Teodor Corban and screenwriter Florin Lazarescu
- FRI 24 JUNE, 21:00 – UK PREMIERE: *Orizont* (Marian Crisan, 2015)
- MON 20 JUNE, 18:15 – UK PREMIERE: *Self-Portrait of a Dutiful Daughter* (Ana Lungu, 2015)
- MON 6 JUNE, 18:10 – TALK: *The Romanian New Wave in Context*
- WED 8 JUNE, 18:10 – TALK: *The New Romanian Cinema: A Critic's Perspective*

Throughout June BFI Southbank will host *Revolution in Realism: The New Romanian Cinema*, in partnership with Romanian Cultural Institute; this season will be dedicated to the 'New Wave' of Romanian cinema that has developed over the last ten to fifteen years, producing original and dynamic films which have really made their mark. These include the *Palme d'or* winning *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* (Cristian Mungiu, 2007) and *The Death of Mr Lazarescu* (Cristi Puiu, 2005), which generated major buzz at Cannes in 2005. The director of the latter, **Cristi Puiu**, is probably the most distinctive filmmaker of the Romanian New Wave (his latest film *Sieranevada* is in competition at Cannes this year, alongside fellow Romanian filmmaker Cristian Mungiu's *Bacalaureat*). The season will include a focus on Cristi Puiu's work, with screenings of his four feature films made before *Sierra Nevada*, two shorts, and a special *Cristi Puiu In Conversation* event at BFI Southbank on **Monday 13 June**. Other filmmakers appearing at BFI Southbank during the season will be **Anca Damian**, **Tudor Giurgiu** and **Radu Muntean**, as well as **Radu Jude**, whose latest film *Aferim* (2015) will be played on extended run from **Friday 10 June**.

Films in the Romanian New Wave are notable for low-key naturalism, subtle social commentary and an awareness of ethical complexity, with suspense and a dark sense of humour also being key

elements. The significant historical, political, social and cultural contexts of the New Wave will be explored in an illustrated presentation – **The Romanian New Wave in Context** – presented by key experts including film critic and scholar Andrei Gorzo and Dominique Nasta, author of ‘Contemporary Romanian Cinema: The History of an Unexpected Miracle’.

Titles screening in the season include: **12:08 East of Bucharest** (Corneliu Porumboiu, 2006), a characteristically dry, dark comedy which focuses on three men who meet to discuss the role their hometown played in the revolution that led to Ceausescu’s downfall 16 years earlier; the tense prison drama **If I Want to Whistle, I Whistle** (Florin Serban, 2010) which won the Grand Jury Prize at Berlin in 2010; and Andrei Ujica’s account of the life and increasingly oppressive regime of Nicolae Ceausescu **The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu** (2010). The season will also include **two UK Premieres** – **Orizont** (Marian Crisan, 2015) is a suspenseful tale of a family taking over the management of a remote mountain guest-house and restaurant, only to fall foul of local gangsters, while **Self-Portrait of a Dutiful Daughter** (Ana Lungu, 2015) centres on a thirty-something engineering student trying to make a go of it living alone while balancing the expectations of her family, friends and others. Three directors, **Anca Damian, Tudor Giurgiu and Radu Muntean**, will join us for a panel discussion about the Romanian New Wave on **Tuesday 28 June**; their films **Crulic – The Path to Beyond** (2011), **Why Me?** (2015) and **One Floor Below** (2015) respectively will also screen during the season.

There will also be screenings of Cristian Mungiu’s *Palme d’or*-winner **4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days** (2007) – set in 1987 when abortion was punishable by prison, the film chronicles one long night for two friends: a pregnant young student and the loyal friend who is determined to help her. **Crulic – The Path to Beyond** (Anca Damian, 2011) tells the true story of a young Romanian wrongly imprisoned for theft while in Poland, while Calin Peter Netzer’s **Child’s Pose** (2013) follows a well-off, middle-aged woman’s desperate efforts to prevent her feckless son from going to jail for reckless driving that killed a child. Winner of Berlin’s Golden Bear, Netzer’s film combines sharp psychological insights, ethical enquiry and social commentary, and features superb performances – the film remains both savagely witty and surprisingly compassionate. There will also be an extended run of Radu Jude’s **Aferim!** (2015) – superbly shot in black-and-white and set in the Wallachian wilderness in the 1830s, this western-style story chronicles the search undertaken by a constable and his son for a runaway Roma who’s wanted by his master for seducing his wife. Director **Radu Jude**, actor **Teodor Corban** and screenwriter **Florin Lazarescu** will take part in a Q&A following a screening on **Tuesday 7 June**.

The four films by **Cristi Puiu** which will be screened are **Stuff and Dough** (2001), a supremely suspenseful road movie which is almost Hitchcockian, **The Death of Mr Lazarescu** (2005), his masterly chronicle of the final hours of a far from charming sixty-something, **Aurora** (2010), which the director also stars in, and **Three Exercises of Interpretation** (2013), a partly improvised film which is reminiscent of Eric Rohmer (to whom the film is dedicated). Also screening will be **Cigarettes and Coffee** (2004), which won Puiu the Golden Bear for best short at Berlin, and **Das Spektrum Europas** (2014), Puiu’s episode from the portmanteau film *The Bridges of Sarajevo*. One of the most cinematically adventurous filmmakers to have emerged this century, **Cristi Puiu** is rightly regarded as a major figure in both Romanian and international cinema and will appear in conversation at BFI Southbank on **Monday 13 June** to discuss his work and career.

In partnership with:



From May to July, the Romanian Cultural Institute hosts a series of events to complement this season. For info please visit icr-london.co.uk.

– ENDS –

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SCREENING DURING THE SEASON:

The Romanian New Wave in Context

This special event provides an opportunity to explore the historical, political, social and cultural contexts that have fed into the films of the Romanian New Wave. Our illustrated presentations from key experts including Andrei Gorzo and Dominique Nasta will be followed by a lively discussion.

Tickets £6.50

MON 6 JUN 18:10 LIBRARY

The New Romanian Cinema: A Critic's Perspective

In this illustrated talk, Geoff Andrew, Senior Film Programmer and curator of this season, will discuss why he considers Romanian filmmaking of the last decade so rewarding and exciting. Using clips both from our general survey and the accompanying Cristi Puiu retrospective, he'll cast a critic's eye on the development of a distinctive but pleasingly varied approach to notions of 'realist' storytelling.

Tickets £6.50

WED 8 JUN 18:10 NFT3

Cristi Puiu in Conversation

One of the most cinematically adventurous filmmakers to have emerged this century, Cristi Puiu is rightly regarded as a major figure in both Romanian and international cinema, expert at turning material of philosophical, sociopolitical and ethical import into suspenseful, witty or emotionally affecting drama. We're delighted to welcome him to the BFI Southbank stage to discuss his work and career with BFI Senior Film Programmer Geoff Andrew.

MON 13 JUN 20:30 NFT3

Romania's New Cinema – How the Filmmakers See It

Just how healthy is Romania's film industry? Is the 'new wave' a real movement or simply a phenomenon? What was it that enabled Romanian filmmaking to flourish so well in recent years? In this panel discussion hosted by Geoff Andrew, directors Anca Damian, Tudor Giurgiu and Radu Muntean will try to answer these and other questions of contemporary relevance.

Tickets £6.50

TUE 28 JUN 18:10 NFT3

Aferim! + Q&A with director Radu Jude*

Romania-Bulgaria-Czech Republic-France 2015. Dir Radu Jude. With Teodor Corban, Mihai Comanoiu, Toma Cuzin. 106min. 18. EST. A STUDIOCANAL release

One of last year's best films, this remarkably vivid recreation of the past confirmed Jude's place in the vanguard of Romanian cinema. Superbly shot in black-and-white 'Scope and set in the Wallachian wilderness in the 1830s, the western-style story chronicles the search undertaken by a constable and his son for a runaway Roma who's wanted by his boyar master for seducing his wife. Painstakingly researched and boasting a credibly archaic (and often very funny) script which subtly illuminates the beliefs, values, aspirations and anxieties of the Ottoman Empire, it reveals how the rich, pious and powerful treated the poor and disenfranchised with barbarically callous cruelty – and acerbically hints at how little may have changed. Quite unlike anything else (even *The Hateful Eight!*), this is bold, beautiful filmmaking.

***Q&A Tue 7 June 18:00 NFT1**

Opens Friday 9 June

12:08 East of Bucharest A fost sau n-a fost?

Romania 2006. Dir Corneliu Porumboiu. With Mircea Adreescu, Teodor Corban, Ion Sapdaru. 89min. 35mm. EST. 15

Winner of the Cannes *Camera d'or* for best first film, Porumboiu's characteristically dry, dark comedy focuses on three men who meet to discuss, on a local TV programme one of them hosts, the role their hometown played in the revolution that led to Ceausescu's downfall 16 years earlier. A gently incisive reflection on the fallibility of memory and the widespread tendency to re-write history.

THU 2 JUN 18:20 NFT2 / SAT 11 JUN 20:50 NFT2 / WED 22 JUN 20:40 NFT2

The Paper Will Be Blue Hîrtia va fi albastră

Romania 2006. Dir Radu Muntean. With Dragos Bucur, Ion Sapdaru, Mimi Branescu. 95min. Digital. EST

Set during the turmoil of late December 1989, Muntean's second feature centres on a soldier who one night abandons his unit with the aim of joining the revolutionary cause, prompting his commanding officer to send out a search party. The presiding mood of chaos and confusion is vividly evoked by a documentary-like naturalism laced with wry black humour.

FRI 3 JUN 20:45 NFT2 / FRI 10 JUN 20:45 NFT2

4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days 4 luni, 3 saptamâni si 2 zile

Romania-Belgium 2007. Dir Cristian Mungiu. With Anamaria Marinca, Laura Vasiliu, Vlad Ivanov. 113min. 35mm. EST. 15

Set in 1987, when abortion was punishable by death, Mungiu's *Palme d'or*-winner chronicles one long dark night of two souls: a pregnant young student (Vasiliu) and the loyal friend (Marinca) who determines to help her. Mungiu and his actors milk the suspense for all it's worth, especially during an excruciating dinner sequence, and Oleg Mutu's camerawork is crucial to the claustrophobic mood of entrapment.

SAT 4 JUN 15:50 NFT2 / TUE 14 JUN 18:20 NFT2 / SAT 25 JUNE 20:45 NFT3

First of All, Felicia Felicia, înainte de toate

Romania-France-Belgium-Croatia 2009. Dirs Melissa de Raaf, Razvan Radulescu. With Ozana Ancea, Vasile Mentzel, Ileana Cernat. 108min. 35mm. EST

A collaboration between Dutch-born de Raaf and her partner Radulescu, a novelist who's co-written many recent Romanian movies (including several in this season), this deftly observed chamber drama reveals the mounting tensions between the members of a seemingly happy family when the eldest daughter – who now lives abroad – misses a flight. The attention to small but telling details makes the bad behaviour horribly credible.

SUN 5 JUN 16:00 NFT2 / WED 8 JUN 20:50 NFT2

If I Want to Whistle, I Whistle Eu cand vreau sa fluier, fluier

Romania-Sweden-Germany 2010. Dir Florin Serban. With George Pistereanu, Ana Condeescu, Mihai Constantin. 94min. Digital. EST. 15

Winner of the Berlinale's Grand Jury Prize, Serban's film is a taut, tense prison drama. A young repeatoffender, resentful towards his mother – who's planning to take his young brother with her to Italy – expresses his anger in ever more violent ways, notwithstanding his attraction to an intern working at the penitentiary. A highly effective study of divided loyalties and ambivalent emotions.

SUN 5 JUN 20:40 NFT2 / THU 16 JUN 18:20 NFT2 / SUN 26 JUN 20:15 NFT2

The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu Autobiografia lui Nicolae Ceausescu

Romania 2010. Dir Andrei Ujica. 180min. Digital. EST

Ujica's account of the life and increasingly oppressive regime of Romania's second and last Communist leader consists of archive footage, some of it previously unseen, much of it originally intended as propaganda. Dispensing with commentary, Ujica uses expert editing and the power of the images themselves to convey the terrible influence of a thoroughly mendacious, power-crazed and ruthlessly self-serving tyrant.

MON 6 JUN 19:45 NFT2 / SAT 11 JUN 14:45 NFT2

Crucic – The Path to Beyond Crucic – drumul spre dincolo

Romania 2011. Dir Anca Damian. 73min. 35mm. EST

Damian chronicles the true story of a young Romanian wrongly imprisoned for theft while in Poland; protesting his innocence with a hunger strike, he was virtually ignored by the authorities of both countries. Sardonic and deeply saddening, the film mixes hand-drawn, cutout and stop-motion animation and newsreel to impressive effect; it carried off the Best Picture prize at the Annecy Animation Festival.

SAT 18 JUN 18:40 NFT2 / TUE 21 JUN 20:50 NFT3 / MON 27 JUN 20:50 NFT3

Child's Pose Pozitia copilului

Romania 2013. Dir Calin Peter Netzer. With Luminita Gheorghiu, Bogdan Dumitrache, Ilinca Goia. 112min. Digital. EST. 15

Winner of Berlin's Golden Bear, Netzer's film combines sharp psychological insights, ethical enquiry and social commentary as it follows a well-off, middle-aged architect's desperate efforts to prevent her feckless, disaffected son from going to jail for reckless driving that killed a child. Gheorghiu's superb performance as the obsessive, overbearing protagonist is rightly ambiguous, ensuring that the film remains both savagely witty and surprisingly compassionate.

SUN 19 JUN 17:10 NFT2 / THU 23 JUN 18:15 NFT3 / WED 29 JUN 20:50 NFT2

Why Me? De ce eu?

Romania 2015. Dir Tudur Giurgiu. With Emilian Oprea, Mihai Constantin, Andreea Vasile. 130min. Digital. EST

Inspired by the true story of attorney Cristian Panait, this tells of an idealistic, highly motivated young lawyer charged with prosecuting an allegedly corrupt colleague. When his investigations reveal that things may not be quite as his superiors suggest, he's torn between his professional ambitions and his desire to expose the truth. A dark, Kafkaesque study of power, corruption and conspiracy.

SUN 19 JUN 19:50 NFT2 / MON 27 JUN 18:00 NFT3

One Floor Below Un etaj mai jos

Romania-Germany-France-Sweden 2015. Dir Radu Muntean. With Teodor Corban, Iulian Postelnicu, Oxana Moravec. 93min. Digital. EST

This dark, deeply unsettling drama centres on an affable, unremarkable car-registration agent (a superb Corban) who, preferring a quiet life, keeps his suspicions concerning the death of a downstairs neighbour from the investigating police; but then the creepy likely culprit begins befriending him and his family... Muntean builds tensions with great skill, never losing sight of the ethical dimensions of an all too-credible encounter.

TUE 21 JUN 18:00 NFT2 / TUE 28 JUN 20:30 NFT3

UK Premiere: Orizont

Romania 2015. Dir Marian Crisan. With András Hatházi, Rodica Lazar, Zsolt Bogdán. 93min. Digital. EST

Crisan's taut, suspenseful tale of a family taking over the management of a remote mountain guest-house and restaurant, only to fall foul of local gangsters, benefits from superior performances – particularly Hatházi's understated turn as Lucian, stubbornly striving to hang on to his dignity and dreams of starting anew. Oleg Mutu's typically excellent camerawork and Cristian Lolea's score add to the mood of brooding menace.

FRI 24 JUN 21:00 NFT3 / THU 30 JUN 18:10 NFT2

UK Premiere: Self-Portrait of a Dutiful Daughter Autoportretul unei fete cuminti

Romania 2015. Dir Ana Lungu. With Elena Popa, Emilian Oprea, Andrei Enache. 80min. Digital. EST

Lungu's debut centres on a thirty-something engineering student trying to make a go of it living alone while balancing the expectations of her family, friends and others. Very much in the style of Cristi Puiu's precisely observed realism, this study of one woman's rather half-hearted struggle for independence focuses on small, subtly illuminating details, most notably her conversations with her father and a gay friend.

MON 20 JUN 18:15 NFT2 / SAT 25 JUN 18:30 NFT2

Stuff and Dough Marfa si banii

Romania 2001. Dir Cristi Puiu. With Alexandru Papadopol, Dragos Bucur, Ioana Flora. 90min. Digital. EST

Puiu's supremely suspenseful road movie follows a high school dropout who agrees, for quick cash, to drive non-stop to Bucharest to deliver a dodgy package. Accompanied by two friends, he soon finds his car being tailed... Puiu's meticulous control of movement, pace and performance, coupled with the skilful evocation of vague but very real menace, is almost Hitchcockian.

+ Cigarettes and Coffee Un cartus de kent si un pachet de cafea

2004. Dir Cristi Puiu. 15min

Winner of Berlin's Golden Bear for best short, this witty, deftly sketched father-son conversation piece speaks volumes about age, class and a changing Romania.

SUN 12 JUN 14:50 NFT3 / MON 13 JUN 18:10 NFT3

The Death of Mr Lazarescu Moartea domnului Lazarescu

Romania 2005. Dir Cristi Puiu. With Ion Fiscuteanu, Luminita Gheorghiu, Doru Ana. 150min. Digital. EST

This masterly chronicle of the final hours of a far from charming sixty-something, ferried from home to busy hospitals by a helpful ambulance worker, is remarkable for its performances, script and mise-en-scène, and the brilliance of its compression of 'real time.' Witty, warm and compassionate, it's also an unusually honest, insightful account of the sheer fragility of human existence.

SUN 12 JUN 17:20 NFT3 / MON 20 JUN 20:10 NFT2

Aurora

Romania 2010. Dir Cristi Puiu. With Cristi Puiu, Clara Voda, Catrinel Dumitrescu, Luminita Gheorghiu. 181min. Digital. EST

Arguably Puiu's most audacious film yet, this centres on Viorel (superbly played by the writer-director himself), first encountered as he wakes around dawn, then followed at length around Bucharest – sometimes involved in ordinary situations, sometimes behaving mysteriously, even unnervingly. Only gradually does the exact significance of certain scenes become evident, but this formidable feat of rigorous realism impresses with its psychological, philosophical and socio-political acuity.

FRI 17 JUN 19:45 NFT2 / SUN 19 JUN 13:30 NFT2

Three Exercises of Interpretation Trois exercices d'interprétation

France 2013. Dir Cristi Puiu. With Ludivine Anbérée, Marion Bottollier, Ugo Broussot. 157min. Digital. EST

Made in three weeks as an actors' workshop project, and based on the book *Three Conversations* by Vladimir Solovyov, this film explores how philosophical discourse can be turned into something dramatically interesting. Partly improvised, it comprises three group encounters where friends discuss life, ethics, spirituality, cinema and so on to witty, engrossing effect, reminiscent of Eric Rohmer (to whom the film is dedicated) and Jean Eustache.

+ Das Spektrum Europas The Spectre of Europe

2014. Dir Cristi Puiu. 10min

Puiu's episode from the portmanteau film *The Bridges of Sarajevo* is a scathing survey of nationalism and xenophobia, played out as a minimalist but hilarious bedroom farce.

SAT 18 JUN 20:15 NFT3 / FRI 24 JUN 17:50 NFT3

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.

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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

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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.

About the RCI

The Romanian Cultural Institute (RCI) is a public cultural organisation founded in 2003 in order to promote Romanian culture around the world. The Institute's cultural diplomacy efforts are channelled through 18 foreign branches located in major capitals of Europe and the United States of America, as well as China and Israel. The RCI also supports the cultural expression and identity of Romanians living across the borders, both in neighbouring countries and in expatriate communities in Europe and elsewhere.

In London, the Romanian Cultural Institute, located at 1 Belgrave Square, works to increase the visibility and impact of the Romanian culture in Great Britain, Ireland and Iceland and to create enduring partnerships between Romanian artists and institutions and their local counterparts.

More at www.icr-london.co.uk

***** 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 / Southbank 2016 / June / The New Romanian Cinema