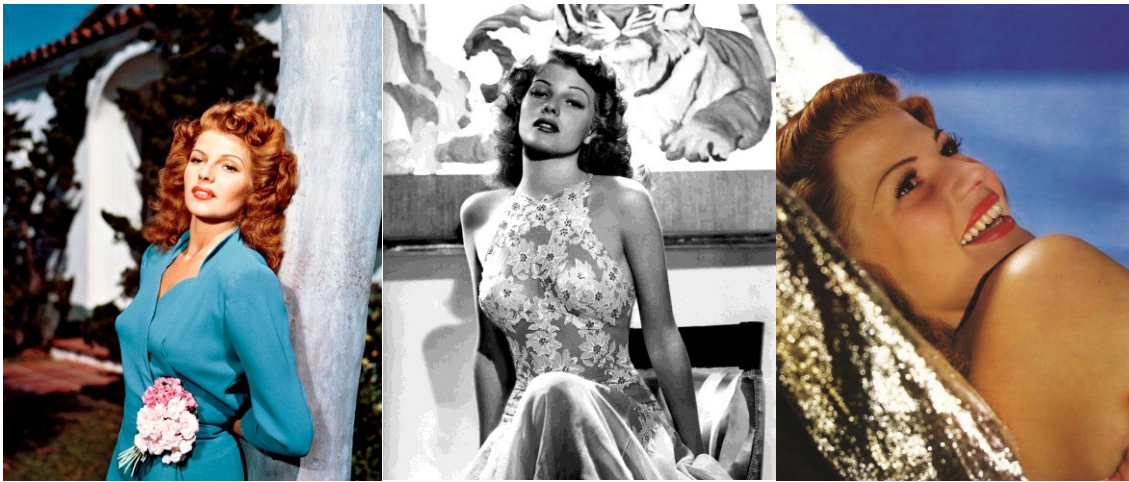


13/18

## Rita Hayworth

**BFI Southbank celebrates 'The Love Goddess' with screenings of classic films including *Gilda*, *Cover Girl* and *You'll Never Get Rich***



**9 May 2013, London.** Rita Hayworth had a torrid personal life which saw her married and divorced five times by the time she was in her mid-forties, leading her to proclaim “men fell in love with Gilda, but they wake up with me”. Throughout June, **BFI Southbank** will present a season of ten of her best-loved films, offering audiences a chance to fall in love not only with Gilda, but Rita and her many characters. If her star power was affirmed through pop-culture references alone, then Hayworth can be considered film royalty: in *The Shawshank Redemption* inmates went wild over her, in *Mulholland Drive* Laura Harring’s character named herself after the actress when she suffers from amnesia, and Madonna decreed that ‘Rita Hayworth gave good face’ in her chart-topping hit *Vogue*. Classic musicals including *You Were Never Lovelier* (1942) and *Cover Girl* (1944) will screen alongside memorable film noir pictures *Gilda* (1946) and *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947), all showing, time and again, why Rita Hayworth remains such an iconic star.

Rita Hayworth appeared in thirty bit-parts before her breakthrough role in *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939) and although she was nervous opposite **Cary Grant**, her performance truly delivered. *Blood and Sand* (1941) was probably the first time her full potential as an actress was explored. Playing a sultry socialite who toys with bullfighter Juan (**Tyrone Power**), Hayworth exudes sophistication and sexual power. However, it was when she danced in musicals that she shone brightest. Hayworth had been a highly skilled professional dancer since she was twelve, and step-for-step she equals **Fred Astaire** in *You'll Never Get Rich* (1941) and *You Were Never Lovelier* (1942). She was also one of only a handful of women to dance with both Astaire and **Gene Kelly**. Columbia Studios reportedly put Hayworth through

months of painful electrolysis, moving her low hairline up her scalp then dying it red to create her memorable look. **Cover Girl** (1944) eerily echoes these real life events – Hayworth positively gleams as Rusty, a young girl who is taken up by a magazine whose stylists completely manufacture her look.

Hayworth's most famous role was in the eponymous **Gilda** (1946), a noir thriller in which she starred opposite **Glenn Ford** and **George Macready**. Hayworth climactic one-glove striptease is one of the most erotic sequences in cinema history. **The Lady from Shanghai** followed in 1947, directed by Hayworth's estranged husband **Orson Welles** who controversially forced Hayworth to cut her signature red hair and bleach it blonde. Columbia slashed over 65 minutes from Welles' rough-cut, but it proved box-office poison. The now celebrated noir-thriller has deep-focus cinematography, serious smouldering and a dazzlingly surreal hall of mirrors finale which is echoed in Woody Allen's *Bullets Over Broadway*. Her final strong performance was opposite Burt Lancaster in **Separate Tables** (1958). Based on the play by Terence Rattigan, *Separate Table* boasted uniformly well-pitched performances, especially Hayworth and Oscar-winners David Niven and Wendy Hiller. Hayworth's profoundly unhappy life marred her later years. Dead in 1987 aged 68, a victim of early onset Alzheimer's and alcoholism, she remains shockingly immediate and alive on screen.

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#### **Screenings taking place in the season:**

##### **Only Angels Have Wings**

USA 1939. Dir Howard Hawks. With Cary Grant, Jean Arthur. 121min. U

A hard-bitten Cary Grant is holed up in the Andes running an air-freight service in an almost documentary style, life-and-death Boy's Own Adventure that's also a terrific love story of unsentimental camaraderie. Into this feast of character-acting steps big-hearted Jean Arthur. Things grow yet more complicated when young Rita Hayworth vamps her way into the picture that made her name.

**Sat 1 June 16:15 NFT1**

**Fri 14 June 18:10 NFT3**

##### **Angels Over Broadway**

USA 1940. Dir Ben Hecht. With Douglas Fairbanks Jr, Thomas Mitchell. 78min. U

How many movie styles can you pack into 78 minutes? Written, directed and produced by Ben Hecht, (*Nothing Sacred*; *His Girl Friday*; *Notorious*), this fast-talking, deliciously high-boozing, bitter comedy is also a crime thriller crossed with a backstager, a heartbreaker beneath *film noir* lighting. Handsome, gum-chewing Douglas Fairbanks inveigles Hayworth's radiant young dancer into a risky gambling plot masterminded by a gloriously grandiose playwright.

**Sun 2 June 16:15 NFT1**

**Tue 4 June 20:40 NFT2**

##### **Blood and Sand**

USA 1941. Dir Rouben Mamoulian. With Tyrone Power, Linda Darnell. 125min. PG

Ever wondered what costume design can do for a picture? Shooting in luscious Technicolor, Mamoulian took a tale of a toreador, ensured everyone shone in super-saturated colours, and pitched Tyrone Power into a dilemma between faithful Darnell and temptress Hayworth's explosive trademark mix of *hauteur* and come-hither. Gazing at her at a bullfight, Laird Cregar drools, 'If this is death in the afternoon, she's death in the evening.'

**Fri 7 June 18:20 NFT2**

**Sun 9 June 16:00 NFT2**

### **You'll Never Get Rich**

USA 1941. Dir Sidney Lanfield. With Fred Astaire, Robert Benchley. 88min. U

This near-screwball musical-comedy of misunderstanding boasts a largely lunatic plot with Astaire joining the army to avoid being shot by showgirl Hayworth's brother who isn't her brother. Still with me? Smart Hayworth equals Astaire step for step in their opening routine, delights in a rumba and winds up duetting with him in a Cole Porter finale on a wedding-cake in the shape of a tank.

**Sat 8 June 16:10 NFT3**

**Tue 11 June 20:40 NFT2**

### **You Were Never Lovelier**

USA 1942. Dir William A. Seiter. With Fred Astaire, Adolphe Menjou. 97min. U

Hayworth's second pairing with Astaire – the only film in which anyone fell in love with him because of his voice – is a 30s mistaken-identity comedy in 40s (well-cut) clothing. Latin maestro Xavier Cugat heats up Jerome Kern's score and highlights include Astaire's tap solo all over his enraged boss' office and Hayworth's joy as she matches him in 'Shorty George' and 'I'm Old-Fashioned'.

**Wed 12 June 18:20 NFT2**

**Sat 15 June 16:00 NFT2**

### **Cover Girl**

USA 1944. Dir Charles Vidor. With Gene Kelly, Phil Silvers, Eve Arden. 107min. U

Loyalty is tested as top-form Hayworth swaps Gene Kelly's Brooklyn club for Broadway fame via *Vanity* magazine. Hayworth positively gleams, doubles as her character Rusty's grandmother and dances like a dream in the sockeroo title number. With Phil Silvers making it an ebullient song'n'dance trio, astringent Eve Arden, Jerome Kern/Ira Gershwin songs and more millinery than you can shake a stick at, it's the finest musical Hayworth made.

**Sun 16 June 16:15 NFT1**

**Thu 20 June 20:45 NFT1**

### **Gilda**

USA 1946. Dir Charles Vidor. With Glenn Ford, George Macready. 110min. U

Hayworth's crowning glory is a jaw-dropping textbook of Hollywood sexual politics. Her climactic strip 'Put The Blame On Mame' (she removes one glove) is one of the most erotic sequences in cinema history. But it's also shockingly clear the moment lethal George Macready smoothly picks up Glenn Ford in the thriller's opening scene that this is one of the gayest straight films ever made. A matchless maelstrom of jealousy.

**Fri 21 June 18:30 NFT1**

**Sat 22 June 20:45 NFT1**

### **The Lady from Shanghai**

USA 1947. Dir Orson Welles. With Welles, Everett Sloane. 87min. PG

'Some people can smell danger. Not me.' So says Orson Welles in hard-boiled voiceover of *femme fatale* Hayworth. Columbia slashed over 65 minutes from Welles' rough-cut, but it proved box-office poison. But the now celebrated *noir*-thriller has deep-focus cinematography, serious smouldering from paradoxically newly ice-blonde Hayworth and a dazzlingly surreal funhouse/hall of mirrors finale echoed in Woody Allen's *Bullets Over Broadway*.

**Sun 23 June 16:15 NFT1**  
**Thu 27 June 18:30 NFT1**

### **Pal Joey**

USA 1957. Dir George Sidney. With Frank Sinatra, Kim Novak. 112min. PG

'I'll sing to him, each Spring to him, and worship the trousers that cling to him' was one of many Rodgers & Hart lyrics deemed too scandalous for Hollywood's version of their Broadway hit musical. But gains included Sinatra swinging through 'The Lady is a Tramp' for the delectation of Hayworth encased in orange fur. Now the classy older woman, she competes with Novak for Sinatra's, er, favours.

**Mon 24 June 20:45 NFT1**

**Sun 30 June 16:15 NFT1**

### **Separate Tables**

USA 1958. Dir Delbert Mann. With Deborah Kerr, David Niven, Burt Lancaster. 100min. PG

Replacing Vivien Leigh when her director husband Laurence Olivier quit the project, Hayworth scores highly as the fading ex-wife of Burt Lancaster (who produced the film), whose unexpected arrival at an unobtrusive hotel unsettles a series of pained relationships. Terence Rattigan's sensitive play survives surprisingly intact thanks to (almost) uniformly well-pitched performances, especially Hayworth and Oscar-winners David Niven and Wendy Hiller.

**Tue 25 June 20:40 NFT2**

**Sun 30 June 18:20 NFT2**

### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

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- 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

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

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