

## **THE GREEN RAY**

(Le Rayon vert)

**Written and directed by Eric Rohmer**

France, 1986, 98 mins, Cert PG

Marie Rivière, Béatrice Romand,  
Vincent Gauthier, Rosette



Opening on 2 January 2015  
at BFI Southbank, IFI Dublin and selected cinemas UK-wide

The fifth tale in Eric Rohmer's *Comedies and Proverbs* series, ***The Green Ray*** is an honest, poignant and often very funny portrait of a twenty-something woman ostensibly looking for a good summer holiday, but yearning for so much more.

One of Rohmer's finest films, it will be re-released by the BFI on **2 January** in cinemas UK-wide and will form the centrepiece of an extensive Eric Rohmer season to take place at BFI Southbank from 1 January to mid-March.

Delphine (Marie Rivière) is a Parisian secretary who, two weeks before her summer holiday, is let down by the friend she was planning to go away with. Desperate not to be left on her own in Paris while everyone else is away, she immediately sets about looking for another way to spend her much longed-for break. She tries a few options – with family, with friends, and alone – but nothing feels right, no-one else seems in tune with her, and she feels increasingly lonely and unhappy. At one point during her travels, Delphine overhears a tourist talking about the 'green ray', a rare optical phenomenon described in a novel of 1882 by Jules Verne. Sometimes glimpsed at sunset, this magical light is said to enable people to read their own feelings and those of others too ...

Shot on 16mm (blown up to 35mm) on a low budget with a tiny crew, *The Green Ray* was almost completely improvised, with the director and his lead actress collaborating on the dialogue during filming (enough to earn Rivière a co-writing credit). The cast was made up of friends, family and strangers encountered on some of the filming locations that included the beach at Biarritz, the countryside near Cherbourg and the La Plagne ski resort in the Alps.

A *tour de force* from the master of understatement and emotional intelligence, *The Green Ray* appears so naturalistic that it could almost be a documentary about the French on holiday. While Delphine might be seen as picky and indecisive, it's hard not to engage with someone so sensitive, vulnerable and ultimately brave in her quest for love and happiness. After seeing *The Green Ray*, Jean-Luc Godard, a former colleague, great friend and long-term admirer of Rohmer, wrote to the director as follows: '*It is so resplendent in its youthfulness and greatness that these poor words of mine are unable to express the emotion aroused by this display of your faith in humanity and the universe... Please tell Marie Rivière that her inventiveness was matched by her truthfulness.*'

Indeed, Rohmer's work, while almost impossible to imitate, continues to inspire directors from around the world. His influence has frequently been discerned in the films of Richard Linklater and Hong Sang-soo, and filmmakers such as Noah Baumbach, Joanna Hogg, Mike Figgis and Mia Hansen-Løve have openly professed their admiration.

*The Green Ray* won the Golden Lion and the Best Actress prize at the 1986 Venice Film Festival. Nearly 30 years on, it is a delight to re-visit, especially in the bleak days of January when we all start dreaming about our next summer getaway.

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**For further information please contact:**

Jill Reading, BFI Press Office

Tel: 020 7957 4759 or [jill.reading@bfi.org.uk](mailto:jill.reading@bfi.org.uk)

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**Notes to editors**

- Five years after his death, with films rediscovered and restored, BFI Southbank reassess one of film's most consistently rewarding artists **Eric Rohmer**. This season will run from 1 January until mid-March, and will include a very rarely seen set of TV documentaries, screenings of Rohmer's **Six Moral Tales**, including **My Night With Maud** (1969) and the extended run of **The Green Ray**.

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