

‘NOT TO HAVE LOVE OR PAIN IN YOUR
HEART MEANS THAT YOU ARE NOT
A VERY WELL FINISHED HUMAN BEING’
CLAIRE DENIS

Claire Denis seems to find pleasure and grief in our status as ‘fallen’ beings, writes season curator **Sophie Monks Kaufman**

‘I guess my films are made out of tenderness and love for human beings even when they can be very brutal,’ Denis said in 2018. She knows herself well; contrasting emotional landscapes colour everything she’s made. The balance sometimes tilts towards brutality (the blood-soaked ears of corn in *Bastards*) and sometimes towards tenderness (the camera tracing body parts in *Vendredi Soir*): this season of 10 films moves from one pole to the other. Mysterious atmospheres electrified by sensuality are a motif of her films, as are the primal sounds of *Tindersticks*, the visions of cinematographer Agnès Godard and the faces of actors she loves to work with, faces which – with the exception of Alex Descas – run more towards dramatic features than classical beauty: Grégoire Colin’s sharp nose, Béatrice Dalle’s gap teeth and Michel Subor’s cold eyes.

WANT MORE?

See pxx for details on our Woman with a Movie Camera Summit, and pxx for a special event on early women filmmakers



TALK

Image: Wild Bunch

The Cinema of Claire Denis

TRT 80min

The highly distinctive work of Claire Denis has defied expectations and pushed the boundary of narrative cinema. In this illustrated talk, season programmer Sophie Monks Kaufman will guide you through Denis' body of work to date, considering stylistic elements and narrative motifs that shape the filmmaking practice and vision of this singular director.

Tickets £6.50



Bastards Les Salauds

France-Germany 2013. Dir Claire Denis. With Vincent Lindon, Chiara Mastroianni, Julie Bataille, Michel Subor. 100min. Digital. EST. 18

This harrowing and hypnotic account of family tragedy, sexual violence and the futility of revenge hinges on a gruffly magnetic performance by Vincent Lindon. He is Marco, a supertanker captain called back to Paris after his sister's husband commits suicide. Marco loses himself pursuing the man he thinks is responsible, while Lola Créton plays a young woman too traumatised to speak.

Also available on **BFIPLAYER**



White Material

France-Cameroon 2009. Dir Claire Denis. With Isabelle Huppert, Christopher Lambert, Nicolas Duvauchelle, Isaach De Bankolé. 106min. Digital. EST. 15

In an unspecified part of French colonial Africa, white coffee plantation owner Maria (Huppert) clings to her land even as civil war and racial conflict brings the spectre of bloodshed ever closer. Adding to

the dangerous atmosphere is her unstable son (Duvauchelle). Dedicated to child soldiers, *White Material* is full of grief, and honours the complexity of souls twisted by colonialism

CLAIRE DENIS

MON 3 JUN
18:30 NFT3

SAT 22 JUN
20:45 NFT2

TUE 25 JUN
20:50 NFT2

SUN 9 JUN
20:15 NFT3

SAT 22 JUN
18:20 NFT3



The Intruder *L'intrus* + intro by season programmer Sophie Monks Kaufman*

France 2004. Dir Claire Denis. With Michel Subor, Grégoire Colin, Béatrice Dalle, Yekaterina Golubeva, 130min. **35mm** EST. 15

Icy-eyed Michel Subor plays Louis, a man who lives alone in the Alps until the need for a heart transplant drives him back into civilisation. Themes of father-son relationships and dreams of violence are present, yet it's often hard to tell what is really happening in this elliptical, maddening, slow-burn, offering of genius – inspired by a Jean-Luc Nancy book.



I Can't Sleep *J'ai pas sommeil*

France-Germany-Switzerland 1994. Dir Claire Denis. With Yekaterina Golubeva, Richard Courcet, Alex Descas, Béatrice Dalle. 110min. **35mm** EST

This rarely-screened early Denis film exemplifies her preoccupation with how banal violence can sit within sympathetic, sometimes graceful people. Set in Paris, the story is driven by an ensemble of characters who are all connected, including a beautiful Lithuanian immigrant, a struggling musician and a transvestite dancer. And one of them might be the serial 'Granny Killer'...



Trouble Every Day + intro by Anna Bogutskaya, BFI Events Programmer*

France-Germany-Japan 2001. Dir Claire Denis. With Béatrice Dalle, Vincent Gallo, Tricia Vessey, Alex Descas. 101min. **35mm** EST. 18

The most romantic cannibal movie you're ever likely to see foreshadowed *High Life* as a science-fiction story rooted in the eerie darkness of humanity. Physical and sexual appetites are as one for force-of-nature Coré

(a brilliantly cast Béatrice Dalle) and controlled newlywed Shane (Vincent Gallo). The Tindersticks' score, with Stuart Staples' haunting baritone, is one of their best.

SUN 9 JUN	SUN 23 JUN	
14:30 NFT3*	20:00 NFT3	

SUN 2 JUN	MON 10 JUN	
17:40 NFT3	20:465 NFT3	

SAT 8 JUN	THU 20 JUN	
20:40 NFT3	18:10 NFT3*	

book online at bfi.org.uk



TALK

Beau Travail

France 1999. Dir Claire Denis. With Denis Lavant, Grégoire Colin, Michel Subor. 93min. **35mm** EST. 15

Jealousy of a popular new recruit (Colin) drives Sergeant Galoup (Lavant) mad under the Djibouti sun in this loose adaption of Herman Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor*. The training routines of French legionnaires are choreographed to sweaty, homo-erotic perfection. Male grace is captured along with more destructive human capabilities in the heat-struck masterpiece that made film-lovers fall head over heels for Claire Denis.

Philosophical Screens: *Beau Travail* and the Philosophy of the Body on Screen

TRT 60min

In Claire Denis' cinema, movement and gesture are at least as significant as dialogue or narrative. The latest event in our popular series exploring cinema through a philosophical lens sees William Brown, John O'Maolearca and Catherine Wheatley examine Denis' masterpiece *Beau Travail*, and how bodies on screen can pose questions about queerness, colonialism, isolation and intimacy.

Free to ticket holders of *Beau Travail* on Wed 19 Jun 18:20, otherwise £6.50 (must be booked in advance due to capacity)



Chocolat

France-West Germany-Cameroon 1988. Dir Claire Denis. With Isaach De Bankolé, Giulia Boschi, François Cluzet, Cécille Ducasse. 105min. **35mm** EST. 15

Claire Denis' debut announced her as a fully formed talent. Partly inspired by her childhood in French colonial Africa, *Chocolat* boasts a coiled central performance by Isaach De Bankolé as Protée, 'house boy'

to a white family. This is a child's-eye-view of racial and sexual tension that bubbles with unspoken desires, injustices, and a jaunty score by Abdullah Ibrahim. A must-see.

WED 5 JUN

20:50 NFT2

WED 19 JUN

18:20 NFT3

WED 19 JUN

20:10 BLUE ROOM

WED 5 JUN

20:40 NFT2

FRI 7 JUN

20:50 NFT3



All the Boys and Girls of Their Time: U.S. Go Home

France 1994. Dir Claire Denis. With Alice Houry, Grégoire Colin, Vincent Gallo, Jessica Tharaud. 67min. Digital. EST. Unconfirmed

This hour of heaven was made for a French TV series called *Tous les garçons et les filles de leur âge...* Alice Houry and Grégoire Colin play squabbling siblings in 1960s suburban France. He smokes and dances to The Animals, she's hell-bent on losing her virginity. They go to a party and meet a US soldier... It's a mini work fizzing with affection.



Let The Sunshine In Un beau soleil intérieur

France-Belgium 2017. Dir Claire Denis. With Juliette Binoche, Xavier Beauvois, Alex Descas, Gérard Depardieu. 95min. Digital. EST. 15

Juliette Binoche radiates soul as a divorced artist looking for love in all the wrong places. The vulnerability of Binoche's performance – akin to her character's music hero Etta James (whose 'At Last' has a big scene) – imbues this classic romcom narrative with depth. Dialogue informed by awareness of social status and male manipulations anchors the breezy tone with the gravitas of hard-won wisdom.



TALK

Vendredi Soir

Vendredi Soir

France 2002. Dir Claire Denis. With Valérie Lemercier, Vincent Lindon, Grégoire Colin, Hélène de Saint-Père. 90min. **35mm** EST. 15

During a gridlocked traffic jam in Paris one rainy Friday night, Laure (Lemercier) picks up Jean (Lindon). They end up making love before returning to their separate lives. The most conceptually simple Claire Denis film, adapted from a novel by Emmanuèle Bernheim, is also her most erotic – alive with sensual details, especially the artistic close-ups of bodies.

Claire Denis: The Politics and Poetics of Desire

TRT 90min

The theme of desire is an integral part of Denis' work, yet its context and meaning evolves across her oeuvre. Join our invited speakers to delve deeper into this defining motif and ask questions such as what is the role of desire in her cinema? And how does Denis use her unique visual language to express the intimacy between the characters and the world?

Tickets £6.50

SUN 2 JUN	SAT 15 JUN	
20:40 NFT2	20:45 NFT3	

MON 24 JUN	SUN 30 JUN	
18:15 NFT2	20:25 NFT2	

MON 3 JUN	WED 12 JUN	
20:45 NFT3	20:45 NFT3	

WED 12 JUN	
18:20 NFT3	