



### **Jean-Luc Godard Retrospective at TIFF 2023**

Bucharest, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023. Founder of the **French New Wave**, radical film critic and intellectual, director **Jean-Luc Godard** (1930 - 2022) will be celebrated at the 22<sup>nd</sup> edition of **Transilvania International Film Festival**. Between 9<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> of June, eight of his acclaimed films will be screened as part of a special retrospective, **Close-up Jean-Luc Godard**, organised with the support of the **French Institute of Romania**.

**TIFF 2023 passes are now on sale - <https://tiff.eventbook.ro/>**

**Jean-Luc Godard's** interest in film began in his youth, when he galvanized a team of enthusiastic critics around **Cahiers du Cinéma**, including **Jacques Rivette**, **Claude Chabrol** and **François Truffaut**. In 1960, his debut shook up the existing frameworks of cinema and soon became a cult film. A masterpiece, revered by audiences and critics alike, **À bout de souffle (Breathless)** portrays the life of a young American woman in Paris (the elegant **Jean Seberg**) and her doomed love affair with a small-time criminal (played by a seductive **Jean-Paul Belmondo**, whose meteoric rise was kick-started by this film). Renowned film critic **Roger Ebert** called Godard's first feature "the most influential debut since Citizen Kane". Based on an idea developed with **Truffaut** and **Chabrol**, **À bout de souffle** quickly became the iconic film of **French Nouvelle Vague**, with **Sight and Sound** calling it "the intellectual manifesto of the movement". The film won the **Silver Bear** at the **Berlin International Film Festival** and the **Jean Vigo Prize**, an important recognition in French cinema.

"It's a simple film about complicated things" Godard was to say about **Le Mépris (Contempt, 1963)**, a film about the conflicts between love, art and the film industry. An aspiring playwright finds himself caught between a tyrannical producer and the director (played by **Fritz Lang**) on the set of a film adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey*. His desire to get along with the producer, by any means necessary, has unexpected consequences, leading his wife (masterfully played by **Brigitte Bardot**) to regard him with increasing contempt. Inspired by **Alberto Moravia's** novel, **Le Mépris** is perhaps Godard's most heart-breaking film, marked by a deep sense of melancholy and disintegration.

Bringing together two great films stars, **Anna Karina** - the director's muse and a representative figure of the French New Wave - and **Jean-Paul Belmondo**, **Pierrot le fou (1965)** is another brilliant example of Godard redefining stylistic boundaries and narrative techniques. **Pierrot** abandons the tedious constraints of an unhappy marriage and flees Paris with a young woman pursued by Algerian assassins. What sounds like a standard thriller narrative with road movie overtones is, in fact, a tender and personal statement about the world, unfulfilled love and the essence of artistic work.

Winner of the **Golden Bear** at **Berlin International Film Festival** in 1965, **Alphaville** became one of Godard's iconic works. A combination of science fiction and film noir, the story follows the journey of secret agent Lemmy Caution (**Eddy Constantine**) through the dystopian city of Alphaville, where feelings are a terrible crime that can bring the death penalty. With a visual style reminiscent of German Expressionism, the film revisits existentialist themes that have always preoccupied Godard such as love, art and the anxiety felt in the face of an absurd world.

A radical work of cinema and a turning point in Godard's career, **La chinoise (1967)** loosely adapts Dostoevsky's *Demons* into a political film about a group of five Mao-supporting



students who plan an assassination. Starring **Anna Wiazemsky** - another of the director's loyal collaborators - and **Jean-Pierre Léaud** in the lead roles, the film is the result of a completely frantic production process, with improvised, autonomous scenes that were later assembled at the editing table. The film won the **Jury Prize** at the **Venice Film Festival** and marks Godard's abandonment of the idea of a narrative film.

"This scathing late-sixties satire from Jean-Luc Godard is one of cinema's great anarchic works", begins **Criterion Collection's** presentation of **Weekend** (1967), a surreal tale of a bourgeois couple who resort to murder to secure the inheritance from their wife's parents. Made in the same year as **La chinoise**, **Weekend** is the polar opposite, offering a nightmarish picture of a society on the brink of collapse. In fact, the film ends with the intertitles: "*end of story*", "*end of cinema*", questioning Godard's very future as a director, and presenting a highly critical view of the role played by commercial film, and therefore by himself, in this downward spiral of societal failure. Fortunately, his decision to stop making films for a while was interrupted by the events of 1968, which gave him a new impetus to create.

Nominated for **Palme d'Or**, **Sauve qui peut (la vie)** (**Every Man for Himself**, 1980) stars **Isabelle Huppert**, **Nathalie Baye** (César Award for Best Supporting Actress) and **Jacques Dutronc**. The film has a prologue, three episodes (*The Imaginary*, *Fear* and *Commerce*) that follow the three main characters and their interactions with each other, and a coda that attempts to provide a resolution for each of the protagonists. Considered one of Godard's most mainstream films after a long period of low-budget experiments and militant films, **Sauve qui peut (la vie)** is deeply inventive and beautifully acted, a symphony about people trying to come to terms with their messy lives in a society where everyone is on their own. The film registered a significant financial and critical success in France, and enjoyed a warm reception in the US, with English subtitles provided by **Charles Bukowski**.

Probably the only Godard film that could be classified as a comedy, **Soigne ta droite!** (1987) stars Godard himself as a director who is guaranteed funding for his films as long as he manages to finish it in 24 hours. With a title that references **Jacques Tati's** short **Soigne ton gauche**, the film is a collection of sketches set to a rock music background; "a filmed poem, a soft electroshock, a Dadaist collage", according to critic **Michel Boujut**.

Fervently political, interested in the limitless possibilities of cinema, constantly experimenting with forms and ideas, with an astonishing intellectual force, Godard is a unique filmmaker whose influence transcends the audiovisual realm, leading critic **Peter Bradshaw** (**The Guardian**) to regard the director's passing as the death of "the last great 20<sup>th</sup>-century modernist".

\*\*\*

Follow us on:

[tiff.ro](http://tiff.ro) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Youtube](#) | [TikTok](#)

\*\*\*

Transilvania International Film Festival is organised by Romanian Film Promotion Association and Transilvania Film Festival Association.



**Presented by:** Transilvania Bank

**Official coffee:** Nespresso

**Official insurer:** Groupama

**Sponsors:** LIDL, TenarisSilcotub, Cemacon, Ursus, JTI

**Monitoring partner:** mediaTRUST