

The UK Premiere of *The Great Arch* to launch the French Film Festival London 2025



Wednesday 12 to Sunday 23 November
Ciné Lumière, London

TUESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2025:

The **Ciné Lumière**, at London's **French Institute**, is proud to announce the first details of the **French Film Festival 2025**. The **33rd Edition** will open with the **UK premiere** of ***The Great Arch* (*L'Inconnu de la grande arche*)**, written and directed by **Stéphane Demoustier** on **Wednesday 12 November**. This acclaimed new drama, based on a true story, stars **Claes Bang**, **Sidse Babett Knudsen**, **Xavier Dolan**, **Swann Arlaud** and **Michel Fau**.

The Great Arch Opening Night Gala will be followed by a Q&A with Stéphane Demoustier and special guests, soon to be announced. This celebrated monument to humanitarian ideals is one of the most spectacular in France, and this portrayal of one person's vision, principles and integrity, undermined by politics and practicalities, is recreated to stunning visual effect. *The Great Arch* was a compelling addition to the Un Certain Regard Official Selection in the Cannes Film Festival 2025.

In 1982 the French President, François Mitterrand, launched an international competition for the design of the Great Arch of La Défense, a structure to stand aligned with the Louvre and the Arc de Triomphe. Otto von Spreckelsen (Claes Bang), a little-known Danish architect and academic, won the high-profile commission. On arriving in Paris, the 53-year-old designer was supported by Mitterrand in leading the project, but his ideas soon clash with budgetary constraints and conflicting politics.

Raïssa Lahcine, Deputy Director of the French Institute and Audiovisual Attaché says:

"It is to my great delight that we will launch this year's edition of the French Film Festival London with Stéphane Demoustier's UK Premiere of The Great Arch. Through a twist on the portrayal of an outsider whose vision and principles disrupt the status quo, Stéphane Demoustier masterfully weaves together the vision of an architect with the constraints and the vicissitudes of politics. Featuring an impeccable cast, the story behind the construction of La Grande Arche in Paris reminds us of the importance of art and culture in our complicated world. We hope the film will resonate with audiences throughout the wider programme."

On being selected to launch the French Film Festival London, Stéphane Demoustier says:

"I am thrilled that The Great Arch has been chosen to launch the French Film Festival London this year! This is a French story. And European. That of a Danish architect who wins an anonymous and international competition for the construction of an emblematic building in Paris. This true story calls for an open-minded approach to creative collaboration and to inspire all."

The French Film Festival London is supported by the Trust of the Friends of the French Institute and is presented in collaboration with the French Film Festival UK.

Further news of this year's outstanding Festival will follow soon, with details of inspiring features, filmmaker Q&As and special events for families. [Members](#) of the French Institute will be able to book tickets to the French Film Festival London during an advance booking window; for regular updates sign-up to the [newsletter](#).

- End -

NOTES TO EDITORS:

**The FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL LONDON at Ciné Lumière will run from:
12-23 NOVEMBER 2025**

SYNOPSIS: L'INCONNU DE LA GRANDE ARCHE / THE GREAT ARCH

Dir: Stéphane Demoustier **Cast:** Claes Bang, Sidse Babbett Knudsen, Xavier Dolan, Swann Arlaud

Country: France, Denmark **2025 Duration:** 105 mins

1982. French President François Mitterrand decides to launch an international architectural competition for the flagship project of his mandate: the Great Arch of La Défense, aligned with the Louvre and the Arc de Triomphe. Against all odds, Otto von Spreckelsen, a Danish architect, wins the competition. Overnight, this 53-year-old man, unknown in France, arrives in Paris where he is propelled at the helm of this pharaonic project. While the architect intends to build the Great Arch exactly as he envisioned, his ideas quickly clash with realistic constraints and the vicissitudes of politics.

PRESS CONTACTS:

ENG: Ilona Cheshire ilonacheshire@gmail.com

FR: Natacha Antolini: natacha.antolini@institut-francais.org.uk

VENUE:

Ciné Lumière, 17 Queensberry Place, London SW7 2DT / 020 7871 3515

www.institut-francais.org.uk / box.office@institut-francais.org.uk

CINÉ LUMIÈRE

With its two screens (225 and 34 seats), equipped with digital and 35mm projection facilities, Ciné Lumière is one of the landmark arthouse cinemas in London.

Particularly known for its broad programme and the promotion of French and European films, Ciné Lumière offers daily screenings of new and exclusive releases, UK premieres, classics, documentaries, family and school screenings, as well as series and retrospectives. It is also valued for on-stage debates attended by directors, actors, scholars and film critics.

Often working in collaboration with British partners, Ciné Lumière projects over 400 films a year cumulating in over 2,000 screenings, features more than 100 on-stage discussions, and welcomes more than 50,000 patrons. It has also established itself as a showcase for world cinema, particularly through the vast array of festivals it collaborates with, highlighting the vitality of French co-productions and attracting international audiences.

FRENCH INSTITUTE IN THE UK

Part of a worldwide network, the Institut français du Royaume-Uni promotes French language and culture and encourages cross-cultural collaborations. Founded in 1910, and based in London, it comprises a Language Centre, a Cultural Centre, Ciné Lumière and La Médiathèque.

The Institut welcomes over 100,000 people each year, thanks to its wide range of public events, from film screenings, debates and festivals to concerts and workshops. It has also developed a broad offer for young audiences through public and school activities and its dedicated spaces, the Bibliothèque Quentin Blake and L'Atelier. It also hosts Gazette, London's most authentic French brasserie.

In addition, the Institut presents and supports external cultural events, in collaboration with British partners, and fosters creation from both sides of the Channel.

The French Film Festival UK:

The French Film Festival is the UK's largest programme of modern French cinema, dedicated to sharing exclusive access to premieres and titles that may not otherwise be seen on a big screen. Additional highlights will include a strand of restored classic titles and expertly crafted education programmes for schools and universities across the country.

<https://frenchfilmfestival.org.uk/>