

And Bardot Became BB



Film Season at Ciné Lumière

23 March – 10 May 2026

Ciné Lumière revisits some of Brigitte Bardot's most iconic films and questions the multiple facets of the myth itself with a series of talks and documentaries, including the UK Premiere of new documentary *Bardot* (2025).

On 23 March Prof. **Ginette Vincendeau** (King's College London), author of *Brigitte Bardot* (2013) and the forthcoming BFI Classics book on Godard's *Le Mépris*, will reflect on the **controversial legacy of the star in the age of 'cancel culture'**.

In her relatively short, 20-year career, Bardot starred in nearly 50 films.

She caused a veritable revolution in the representation of women and female desire in the conservative and patriarchal 1950s and early 60s. In most of her films and beyond the cliché of the 'sex bomb' that came to define her, she is a uniquely modern, fiercely independent figure. Adulated by her fans and pursued by paparazzi, she was, in equal measure, the object of violent hostility.

After playing in a few light comedies, her breakthrough came with Vadim's first film, *And God Created Woman*, which caused a commotion when it came out in December 1956. It then

acquired a powerful international aura of scandal after its American release in September 1957, when powerful figures called for its banning. A publicity tag ran, “and God created woman... but the devil invented Brigitte Bardot”.

From then on, Bardot became a star and a celebrity on an unprecedented scale, a ‘phénomène de société’ endlessly scrutinised, photographed and discussed in what was termed Bardomania.

This season includes box-office hits such as *The Bride is too Beautiful* (1956) and *La Parisienne* (1957), both comedies in which she plays a variation of the ‘dumb blond’ while putting forward her sense of independence; and also one of her most complex role, not least because of the tempestuous relation with director **H.G. Clouzot**: *La Vérité* (1960).

A Bardot season would not exist without her work with New Wave directors **Louis Malle** and **Jean-Luc Godard**, who made films about her rather than with her: respectively, the quasi-autobiographical *A Very Private Affair* (1962) and *Le Mépris* (1963). The bardomania is equally reflected in **Jacques Rozier’s** short documentaries *Paparazzi* and *Le Parti des choses*, filmed during the shooting of *Le Mépris*.

Bardot’s celebrity went beyond her films, anticipating celebrity culture by decades. Eminent writers, journalists and photographers were obsessed with her private life and what she represented, including Simone de Beauvoir and Marguerite Duras.

She retired from filmmaking in 1973 and devoted the rest of her life, as well as her personal fortune, to animal welfare, creating the Fondation Brigitte Bardot in 1985.

Over the years, still harassed by fans and photographers, she became an increasingly isolated and controversial figure, expressing racist views for which she was convicted several times, as well as anti #MeToo movement statements, further distancing herself from the mainstream.

The new documentary *Bardot* (2025), which will receive its UK Premiere on 6 May, takes us on a journey through the different phases of Bardot’s life, fame and engagement, bringing nuance to a life too often reduced to a single dimension.

Venue: Ciné Lumière at the Institut français, 17 Queensberry Place, London SW7 2DT

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