

Renovation of the Ciné Lumière

Under the patronage of Kristin Scott Thomas



The French Institute in South Kensington London is pleased to announce the upcoming renovation of its main cinema, Ciné Lumière, under the patronage of Franco-British actor and director Kristin Scott Thomas.

The announcement was made on Friday 29 May 2026 at Ciné Lumière in the presence of Kristin Scott Thomas on the opening night of the UK release of her directorial debut *My Mother's Wedding*.

This major campaign aims at **improving the cinema-going experience for the public in terms of comfort, image and sound quality as well as delivering cultural events to the highest standards.** The renovations will keep the integrity of the **Art Deco interior** and allow the French Institute to extend its ambitious range of activities.

“It is with immense elation that I have been bestowed the honour of figurehead for the imminent refurbishment of the Ciné Lumière. Having built my life and career in both France and the UK, I feel very close to the core mission of this cinema. I adore seeing films at Ciné Lumière, and I look forward to watching this place continue to thrive. As a dual citizen, I am intrinsically aware of just how strong the bond is between France and the UK. Ciné Lumière is emblematic of this very duality; where histories, cultures, and the art of film continue to nourish us.” said Kristin Scott Thomas

Ciné Lumière has established itself as **one of London's top independent cinemas**, with an eclectic programme of **400 French and foreign language films** every year, most of them awarded in festivals, spanning **over 2000 screenings and 100 on-stage events** attended by directors and actors. Attracting an **international audience**, its programme combines new releases, previews, classics, documentaries, family and school screenings and over **15 festivals**, including the in-house-curated French Film Festival London.

The renovation campaign is designed as a gradual evolution of the venue. It begins with what is at the heart of cinema: the audience's experience. Comfort, accessibility, and hospitality form the first stage of this transformation. In the second phase, the focus shifts to the artistic and technical experience, with the modernisation of projection and sound equipment to meet contemporary cinema standards. Finally, the renovation extends to the creative spaces and backstage areas, enabling Ciné Lumière to host artists, teams, and events in conditions that match its cultural ambition.

Supported by an on-going fundraising campaign run by the Friends of the French Institute Trust, the work, led by Mc Farlane, will unfold in 3 successive stages over the summers 2026, 2027 and 2028. See more precise plan below

During the first stage of the renovation (13 July - 27 August 2026) the regular activity of the French Institute's Cultural Centre won't be affected:

- continuity of the activity from 13 to 26 July: the French Institute will remain open offering its regular events and activities and the cinema screenings will keep running in the Ciné Lumière II, the second cinema theatre.

- usual summer closure from 27 July to 27 August: the French Institute (Cultural Centre and Ciné Lumière) will be closed

- The French Institute and Ciné Lumière (both theatres) will reopen on 28 August.

NOTE TO THE EDITORS

About the renovation

The work consists in 3 successive stages:

- **The stage 1 (13 July - 27 August 2026)** will focus on providing all moviegoers with optimal comfort in a renovated theatre that is accessible and true to its Art Deco heritage. It includes:
 - a complete refurbishment of the theatre including seating and soundproofing
 - the improvement of the accessibility and facilities

- **The stage 2 (August 2027)** will take the cinema to its highest technical level. The works include:
 - new sound and projection equipment
 - new screen
 - extension of the balcony seating capacity
- **The stage 3 (August 2028)** will focus on the stage and backstage facilities:
 - stage access improvement
 - new stage lighting
 - renovation of the green rooms

About 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.

About the 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.