

French Film Festival London 2026

18 to 29 November at the Ciné Lumière



Full Programme Revealed with Exclusive Premieres, Classic Restorations, Family Screenings and Special Guests Across 40 Films

MONDAY 5 OCTOBER 2026:

The **French Film Festival London 2026** has just unveiled the full programme of more than **40 titles** to screen at the sumptuous and newly refurbished **Ciné Lumière**, part of London's **French Institute**, from **18 to 29 November**. The Festival will feature 20 UK premieres, award-winning previews and short films alongside innovative animation and restored classics, many of which will be accompanied by Q&As with leading names in filmmaking, such as **Christophe Honoré**, **Sophie Marceau** and **Sandrine Kiberlain**. This November the Ciné Lumière – the home of French cinema in England – invites audiences, from cineastes to the Franco-curious, to delight in this year's eclectic presentation.

The **FFFL 2026** will launch on **Wednesday 18 November** with the Palme d'Or nominee **A Woman's Life** (*La Vie d'une femme*), by **Charline Bourgeois-Tacquet** starring the two-time César winner **Léa Drucker** and **Mélanie Thierry**. This Opening Night Gala will be followed by an exclusive Q&A with Drucker and Bourgeois-Tacquet. To close this year's edition will be the UK premiere of **The Birthday Party** (*Histoires de la Nuit*), directed and adapted by **Léa Mysius** and starring **Monica Bellucci** (also an acclaimed César Award-winner). Mysius will discuss her stunningly shot, tense thriller which revolves around a celebratory gathering that goes awry after a family post to social media brings the past and present together. Also nominated for a Palme d'Or, this noir features **Hafsia Herzi**, **Benoît Magimel** and newcomer **Tawba El Gharchi** in a bold debut performance.

Further award-winning or nominated feature films in this diverse programme will bring some of the best new French cinema to Festival audiences. Expertly curated, many new titles highlight the creativity of women behind the camera, such as **Anat Even's *Collapse***; a profound, personal account of the destruction of Gaza, made when the filmmaker documents her return to Israel after October 7, 2023. The semi-autobiographical ***Ulysse***, directed by **Laetitia Masson**, starring **Elodie Bouchez**, shares the tender story of a unique child finding his place in the world despite his disability, while the haunting ***In Waves*** by **Phuong Mai Nguyen** is the stunning 2D/3D hybrid animation, that took five years to adapt from the graphic memoir.

The winner of the Palme d'Or at Cannes 2026 was **Cristian Mungiu's *Fjord*** – which received a 12-minute standing ovation and has also won both the FIPRESCI Prize and the François Chalais Prize. This legal thriller is inspired by the true story of a family whose children were forcefully taken from them by the Norwegian authorities. Another highlight from Cannes is **Asghar Farhadi's *Parallel Tales***; loosely based on Krzysztof Kieślowski's *Dekalog: Six*, it features an ensemble cast with cinematic luminaries such as **Isabelle Huppert**, **Virginie Efira** and **Vincent Cassel**; while ***Coward***, directed by **Lukas Dhont**, is a poignant depiction of a gay love story in the Belgian trenches of World War I.

New films from further established directors will screen, including **Andrey Zvyagintsev** with ***Minotaur***, **Cédric Kahn** and ***A Place to Heal (15/18)*** and **Christophe Honoré's *Orange-Flavoured Wedding (Mariage au goût d'orange)***, starring **Adele Exarchopoulos**. **Ryusuke Hamaguchi** brings his first French language offering ***All of a Sudden***, starring **Virginie Efira**, while **Xavier Giannoli** unveils his WWII drama ***The Rays and Shadows***. The acclaimed swansong by legendary director-writer **Alain Cavalier**, now 94, will be an exclusive big screen outing for his new quasi-documentary about simple joys and revelations of life.

Jim Queen and the Quest for Chloroqueeer is the hilarious adult animated feature from **Nicolas Athané** and **Marco Nguyen**, set in Paris and following the outbreak of a mysterious virus that turns gay men into heterosexuals. Where, or who, is the root of this disease that might only be conquered by true love? In an alternative take on sexual identity, the musical drama ***Congo Boy***, directed by **Rafiki Fariala**, follows Robert, a 17-year-old Congolese youth whose family are displaced by war in the DRC. With both his parents in prison for falsifying their passports, Robert struggles to balance caring for his younger siblings and pursuing a budding musical career as a rap artist. An astounding new talent has been discovered with Bradley **Fiomona Dembeasset**, whose lead performance won the Best Actor prize at Cannes.

CineFamilies is the strand that will inspire young minds and their imaginations with two new dazzling animations: **Louis Clichy's** feature debut ***Iron Boy (Le Corset)*** won the Un Certain Regard Jury Prize in Cannes this year. In this hand-painted, 2D coming of age tale, 10-year-old Christophe is forced to wear a medical corset after an accident on the family farm. His emotional world is thrown into turmoil, until he discovers the healing power of music and meets Clara, with whom he learns to adapt to change. **Sébastien Laudenbach's *Viva Carmen! (Carmen, l'oiseau rebelle)*** presents a strikingly gorgeous and modern rendition of the world's most popular opera by Georges Bizet, transporting families to 1820s Seville. 13-year-old Salva becomes fascinated by the mysterious Carmen, when he receives an omen that her life is in danger, he calls on his street friends to save her.

Further Festival highlights are a focus on **Cinéma du Réel**, which for almost 50 years has pioneered the discovery of documentary and essay films; this strand launches a partnership with the Réel. As we approach the bicentenary of photography, an exhibition celebrating the centenary of The Ecole Nationale Supérieure Louis-Lumière in Paris, one of the oldest schools of cinematography and photography in the world, will be on display in the Institut français' Salons. For the duration of the FFFL 2026 portraits of cinematographers, taken by the School's students, will highlight those behind the lens. While the Classic Cinema strand will present restorations including **La Note bleue** (*Blue Note*), one of the four films that director **Andrzej Żuławski** made with Sophie Marceau, and the actor's screen debut in **La Boum**; the FFFL 2026 looks forward to welcoming her to the Ciné Lumière.

Diane Gabrysiak, Head of Programming and Exhibition at the Ciné Lumière says:

This year's Festival will offer the unique opportunity to explore the breadth of voices and points of view in contemporary French cinema, the many ways of reflecting on and engaging with the world and our legacies, whether through fiction or documentaries, live-action or animation, comedies, dramas or genre films from emerging or established directors. The team behind FFFL is dedicated to curating a bold, inclusive programme that will not only entertain, but challenge perspectives, invite discussion and celebrate the craft and history of filmmaking.

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

"40 films, nearly 90 screenings, previews, UK premieres, fiction, documentaries and short films: this new edition of the French Film Festival London confirms the role of Ciné Lumière as the prime showcase for French cinema in London with rich and diverse cinema. The FFFL demonstrates a cinema that captures the world we live in without compromise on creative freedom; where established filmmakers meet new generations and where popular films sit alongside more radical works. It is a gateway to the UK for the films, artists and talents shaping French cinema today.

The French Film Festival London 2026, independently curated by Ciné Lumière, is supported by Unifrance, Eurostar, the Pelham London, Pol Roger, Les Néréides and Moët Hennessy.

Click here to access the [French Film Festival London Programme](#)

For regular updates sign-up to the [newsletter](#).

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

The [FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL LONDON](#) at Ciné Lumière will run from:
18-29 NOVEMBER 2026

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ADOPT A SEAT

In 2026 we started an extensive renovation of Ciné Lumière under the patronage of Kristin Scott Thomas. This renovation will take place in three stages. We have launched an 'Adopt a Seat' campaign to raise money to support the present and future of Ciné Lumière, its programme and its iconic Art Déco features. By adopting a seat, patrons will directly support the renovation of Ciné Lumière while enjoying a range of benefits during the festival.

For further information:

<https://www.institut-francais.org.uk/join-support-us/renovation-of-cine-lumiere/#/>

CINÉ LUMIÈRE

With its two screens (220 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 the [Centre Molière](#) the renovated language 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.