



Press Release: 15 February 2007

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## **Film culture gets a huge boost with the launch of BFI Southbank**

### **Optronica and London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival form part of exciting new programme**

- Over 300 archive films and television programmes available to view for free in state-of-the art Mediatheque
- Gallery for leading UK and international artists' work in film, video and new media
- Digital Cinema that also supports a broader education programme and community events
- Research and hands-on space to support new emphasis on education and learning
- Best-stocked Filmstore in London with thousands of DVD and book titles relating to film and media culture
- Opening programme to feature exciting blend of music, film and audiovisual performance, plus the best in contemporary gay and lesbian cinema from around the world

The BFI confirms today that its revitalised destination for film on London's South Bank will open to the public on **Wednesday 14 March 2007**. The redevelopment work has been completed thanks to significant investment from a number of partners\*, most notably the BFI's core funders, the DCMS and UK Film Council.

Visitors will be able to explore and enjoy film culture in many unique and exciting ways when they visit the new space. The building will simply be known as **BFI Southbank** and it will become a 'front door' to the BFI and the full spectrum of its activities, providing UK audiences with one of the most ambitious and wide-ranging programmes of film and screen culture anywhere in the world. In addition to the existing three cinemas, the newly renovated space will include:

**Mediatheque:** free access to over 300 film and television titles from the BFI National Archive, some familiar, some less so, spanning more than 100 years of moving images. These include a collection of 100 **Essentially British** films and programmes themed around Britain and British identities, **Exodus** a programme of documentaries exploring Britain's role in the slave trade, and marking the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Anti-Slave Trade Act, and **London Calling** in which we see our capital through the eyes of film-makers

**Gallery:** Showcasing leading UK and international artists' work with moving image, the BFI Gallery opens with an exhibition from the New York-based pioneers of media art, **Jennifer & Kevin McCoy** entitled: **Tiny, Funny, Big and Sad**

**Studio Cinema:** An intimate space where visitors can discover something unexpected ranging from archive and contemporary film, video and television, talks and presentations plus community and education events

**Project space:** from talks on contemporary and classic film directors to practical workshops for would-be filmmakers

**Filmstore:** a shop stocked and staffed by BFI experts and where visitors can browse and purchase over 2,000 book titles and 1,000 DVDs

The BFI Southbank programme launches with an eclectic blend of contemporary and historical cinema in a stunning line-up that features interviews with **Werner Herzog, Julie Christie, Danny Boyle** and **Shane Meadows**, plus previews of their new films. Seasons will highlight the cinematic genius of **Terence Davies**, the weird and wonderful world of **Alejandro Jodorowsky**, rare gems from the history of Chinese martial arts cinema with **Heroic Grace II** and the continuation of the BFI's selection of films which have inspired cinema as an artform with **Out of the Shadows: 50 Cinematic Masterpieces** – and much, much more besides.

Also part of the opening programme is **Optronica**, Britain's most ambitious audio-visual festival that explores the convergence of music, visuals and the emerging possibilities of cinema. It will run from 14th-18th March and promises a dynamic blend of some of the most highly regarded names working in film, electronic music and media, including: **Peter Greenaway**, with the UK premiere of *Tulse Luper*; **Fred Deakin** (*Lemon Jelly*) and **Trevor Jackson**; plus **Charles Atlas** and **Christian Fennesz**. There will also be special screenings, talks and workshops.

The **21<sup>st</sup> London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival** comes of age on 21 March – 4 April. The programme promises to deliver another glittering year of film premieres, events and new titles from around the world plus a host of special guests. The main sponsor for this year's Festival is Accenture, the global management consulting company.

More detailed information on the opening programme will be released closer to the opening of BFI Southbank.

-Ends-

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**Notes to Editors**

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.

Please note that as of **14<sup>th</sup> March 2007** the **NFT will be known as BFI Southbank**. Please direct all listings information to the new venue's name.

**\*Acknowledgements**

The BFI would like to thank the following for generously supporting BFI Southbank:

**UK FILM | COUNCIL**



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**CHRISTIE**

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