



Joseph Losey

This June marks the centenary of the birth of **Joseph Losey** (1909-1984) - one of the most visionary and challenging directors of his generation. To mark this occasion **BFI Southbank** will present a comprehensive retrospective of his films including some of the commercials he made throughout his career (totalling more than 200). As a centrepiece of this first instalment of our season the BFI will re-release Losey's masterpiece *Accident* (1967); recently restored by the **BFI National Archive** and rightsholder **Studio Canal**. This restoration will receive a world

premiere in the **Cannes Classics** programme, presented in a new, digital format this month.

A lawyer's son, born within a few years and a few miles of Nicholas Ray and Orson Welles in southern Wisconsin and educated at an Ivy League college, Joseph Losey was a difficult, complex, self-questioning man. He arrived in Hollywood at the age of 35, formidably equipped intellectually, immersed in Marx, Freud and Stanislavsky, and highly experienced in both theatre (left-wing, avant-garde and commercial) and radio. He made several short films under contract to MGM, produced the 1946 Oscar ceremonies and directed **Charles Laughton** in a legendary first English version of *Galileo* by his friend Bertolt Brecht, whose death mask was to adorn Losey's office in London.

His feature debut, *The Boy with Green Hair* (1948), starred 11-year-old **Dean Stockwell** and was initially shelved when the red-baiting **Howard Hughes** acquired RKO. Four films (including a re-working of *M* in 1951) later Losey fell victim to the House Un-American Activities Committee and went into exile in Britain, where for years he lived hand-to-mouth, working pseudonymously under Special Branch surveillance, fearful of deportation. But he hung on, making what he could of unpromising projects, often working with other blacklisted writers and forming alliances with actors such as **Dirk Bogarde**, for his first British feature *The Sleeping Tiger* (1954), and **Stanley Baker**, in *Blind Date* (1959) and *The Criminal* (1960), and some of the UK's finest cinematographers. With their help he produced a remarkable body of intense, politically acute work that placed its characters in visually precise social contexts. Among the greatest things that happened to British cinema were the arrival on our shores of the Korda brothers in the 30s, Losey in the 50s and Kubrick in the 60s.

The French were the first to discover Losey, but the British auteur-oriented magazine **Movie** (started in 1962 with a still from *The Damned* on its cover) promoted him here and helped create a cult following. The year 1963 was the turning point with the Hammer release of *The Damned*, followed by *Eve* (*Eva*, 1962) and finally his first fully realised and landmark film, *The Servant* (1963), which concludes the first and kicks off the second part of this retrospective, when our programme will include: *Modesty Blaise* (1966), *Secret Ceremony* and *Boom!* (both made in 1968 and starring **Elizabeth Taylor**) and *The Go-Between* (1970).

Extended Run: *Accident* [Digital]

Fri 5 June – Thurs 18 June

Losey reached the peak of his career with this masterpiece, the second of his collaborations with Harold Pinter exploring class and the British character.

The time is a hot summer in Oxford where **Losey's** favourite British actors, **Dirk Bogarde** and **Stanley Baker**, play contrasted dons, close friends and deadly rivals whose relationship is brought to a critical point by an enigmatic Austrian princess, a doomed British aristocrat and an off-screen accident. Silences are as important as words in a world dominated by lies and self-deception, and the only truly honest person is destroyed. Meticulously acted and directed, superbly lit by **Gerry Fisher** (on the first of his eight Losey films), this is a continental film in the manner of Resnais and Antonioni that gets into people's minds and beneath the surface of things. It features several of

Losey's greatest sequences, including Bogarde's silent assigation with Delphine Seyrig and an unforgettable long-take.

UK 1967 Dir Joseph Losey With Dirk Bogarde, Stanley Baker, Michael York, Jacqueline Sassard 105min

Newly restored by the BFI National Archive. A BFI release PG

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June Programme:

Early Shorts Programme

Pete-Roleum and His Cousins (USA 1939, 16min); Youth Gets a Break (USA 1941, 28min); A Child Goes Forth (USA 1941, 20min); A Gun in His Hand (USA 1945, 19min)

Losey cut his cinematic teeth with a colourful puppet movie about the global significance of oil, made for the New York World's Fair in 1939, with music by the avant-garde composer Hanns Eisler. His next two films were public service documentaries, while his first Hollywood movie, *A Gun in His Hand* – a contribution to MGM's long-running series of short features, *Crime Does Not Pay* – was Oscar-nominated.

Fri 5 June 20:30 NFT2, Sat 6 June 18:10 NFT3

The Boy with Green Hair

USA 1948. With Dean Stockwell, Pat O'Brien, Robert Ryan, Barbara Hale. 82min. U

Losey's feature debut is a forceful fable about prejudice, xenophobia and racism starring 11-year-old Dean Stockwell as a war orphan who becomes the centre of a small-town controversy when he wakes up one morning with green hair. It was one of several didactic movies produced by RKO's liberal head, Dore Schary, to challenge the hysteria created by the House Un-American Activities Committee and the burgeoning Cold War.

Tue 2 June 18:20 NFT2* Sat 6 June 13:30 NFT3 *Introduction by Marek Losey **Movie Magic screening**

The Dividing Line aka *The Lawless*

USA 1949. With MacDonald Carey, Gail Russell, Lalo Rios. 80min. U

Scripted by Geoffrey Homes, author of *Out of the Past*, this hard-hitting 30s- style social-conscience thriller, shot largely on location, centres on a crusading newspaper editor risking his career when defending a young Hispanic wrongfully charged with raping a white girl in a small Californian town. It pursues themes from *The Boy with Green Hair* with greater vigour in an acutely observed community.

Tue 2 June 20:45 NFT2, Tue 9 June 14:30 NFT2, Fri 19 June 18:20 NFT3, Sun 21 June 18:30 NFT3

The Prowler

USA 1951. With Van Heflin, Evelyn Keyes, John Maxwell. 92min. PG

Losey's finest American film, a noir thriller that can be spoken of in the same breath as *Double Indemnity*, is exquisitely acted by Van Heflin as a sad Los Angeles cop and Evelyn Keyes as a discontented housewife, whose DJ husband he kills through desire and ambition. The plotting is persuasive and the complex, self-deceiving characters are carefully located in their lower-middle-class world.

Wed 3 June 18:10 NFT1, Sat 6 June 20:45 NFT2

M

USA 1951. With David Wayne, Howard da Silva, Martin Gabel, Luther Adler. 88min

A close transposition of Fritz Lang's 1931 masterpiece to Los Angeles with the light comic actor David Wayne impressive as the child murderer pursued by an alliance between the police and the respectable underworld; a role originally created by Peter Lorre. Shorter than its predecessor, but equally political in its thrust and well rooted in American society, with exceptional use of LA's iconic Bradbury Building.

Thu 4 June 20:45 NFT1, Sun 21 June 20:45 NFT3, Thu 25 June 18:15 NFT1

The Big Night

USA 1951. With John Barrymore Jr, Preston Foster, Howland Chamberlin, Dorothy Comingore. 75min. 12A

Losey's final American film was severely re-edited by its producer, but remains a compelling allegorical noir drama that Losey co-scripted with novelist Stanley Ellin. On his 17th birthday, a bartender's son sees his father humiliated by a crippled sportswriter and sets out (gun in pocket) on a revenge trip through a dark, guilt-ridden city that becomes a journey into manhood.

Thu 4 June 18:40 NFT2, Tue 9 June 18:20 NFT2

Stranger on the Prowl *Imbarco a mezzanotte*

Italy 1952. Dir Andrea Forzano (ie Joseph Losey). With Paul Muni, Joan Larring, Vittorio Manunta. 82min. English version (some Italian subtitles). PG

Losey's first European movie, shot in Italy, was a succession of problems and disasters, concluding with the news of his blacklisting. He claimed never to have seen the released film. The great Paul Muni (whom Losey loathed) plays a penniless outcast in a ruined port, who accidentally kills a shopkeeper and goes on the run with a small boy in tow.

Fri 5 June 18:10 NFT2, Sun 7 June 16:10 NFT2

The Sleeping Tiger

UK 1954. Dir Victor Hanbury (ie Joseph Losey). With Dirk Bogarde, Alexis Smith. 89min. U

In the first movie of his exile, Losey was forced to adopt a pseudonym to direct this stark melodrama, in which sleazy thug Bogarde (in the first of their five collaborations) seduces the wife of a starchy-eyed shrink who's taken him in for observation. Hyper-charged Freudian stuff by the prevailing British standards. The script is credited to 'Derek Frye' (fellow blacklisted Carl Foreman).

+ A Man on the Beach

UK 1955. With Donald Wolfelt, Michael Medwin, Michael Ripper. 28min. U

Diverting short psychological thriller about a fugitive criminal meeting a blind recluse in Belgium.

Thu 11 June 18:15 NFT2*, Sat 13 June 18:20 NFT2, Tue 16 June 14:30 NFT2, Sun 21 June 15:30 NFT3

*Programme introduction by Nigel Algar, discussing the recent BFI National Archive restoration – supported by The Lyme Regis Film Society – of A Man on the Beach

Time Without Pity

UK 1957. With Michael Redgrave, Leo McKern, Alec McCowen, Ann Todd. 85min. PG

In the first full-length British feature bearing his own name, Losey threw himself into the anti-capital punishment campaign fuelled by the Evans/Christie and Ruth Ellis trials; though this is no simple polemic. Redgrave plays an alcoholic father trying to save his unjustly convicted son from the gallows, with time and speed forcefully dramatised. Photographer Freddie Francis is in fine form.

Mon 15 June 18:30 NFT2

The Gypsy and the Gentleman

UK 1958. With Melina Mercouri, Keith Michell, Patrick McGoohan. 107min. PG

Losey needed the money, and this Rank assignment gave him the opportunity to inject Brechtian historical reality into an overblown Regency melodrama. Michell is a decadent aristocrat going to the bad under the influence of Mercouri (partner of another blacklisted director, Jules Dassin). Working with cinematographer Jack Hildyard, about to win an Oscar for *Bridge on the River Kwai*, he tried to give it the look of Rowlandson watercolours.

Thu 18 June 18:10 NFT2*, Sat 20 June 20:40 NFT2, Wed 24 June 14:00 NFT2**

*Introduction by costume designer Julie Harris **Seniors' Matinee + intro

Blind Date

UK 1959. With Stanley Baker, Hardy Krüger, Micheline Presle. 93min. PG

In his first film with Losey, a tough, socially critical thriller, Stanley Baker plays a maverick Welsh cop taking on the British Establishment to clear working-class Belgian artist Hardy Krüger, framed for murder. Micheline Presle plays the slinky femme fatale at the heart of the intrigue. Krüger's paintings of miners in the style of Josef Herman were run up by designer Richard MacDonald.

Mon 1 June 20:40 NFT2*, Tue 9 June 20:45 NFT2, Sat 13 June 16:00 NFT1 *Joint ticket available with Joseph Losey: An Illustrated Introduction £12.90, concs £9.65 (Members pay £1.40 less)

Wed 17 June 20:50 NFT2

The Intimate Stranger

UK 1956. Dir Joseph Walton (ie Joseph Losey). With Richard Basehart, Mary Murphy, Constance Cummings, Roger Livesey, Mervyn Johns. 95min. PG

This complicated, elegant B-feature thriller stars the always angsty Basehart (who'd just made two films with Fellini) as an American producer attempting a comeback in the British film industry. It touches on the blacklist, exile, betrayal, the compromises involved in moviemaking, and features a fine cast, a low budget, a 12-day schedule and the loan of major art works from rich left-wing exiles.

Fri 12 June 18:20 NFT2, Sat 13 June 20:45 NFT2, Sat 20 June 18:20 NFT2

F The Criminal

UK 1960. With Stanley Baker, Sam Wanamaker, Patrick Magee, Jill Bennett, Grégoire Aslan. 97min. 12A

The first unquestionably outstanding movie of Losey's exile brings together a remarkable team for an incisive Marxist portrait of the criminal justice system, prison life and the London underworld, starring Baker as a doomed gangster. Script by Alun Owen, score by John Dankworth, superb monochrome photography by Robert Krasker (Oscar-winner for *The Third Man*) and one of British cinema's finest casts. Plus Losey's 1959 short *First on the Road* (12min).

Sun 14 June 15:20 NFT1, Fri 19 June 20:40 NFT2, Fri 26 June 18:10 NFT2

The Damned

UK 1962. With MacDonald Carey, Alexander Knox, Oliver Reed, Shirley Ann Field. 87min

Its release delayed for a year by puzzled Hammer executives, this riveting nuclear-angst thriller centres on an American visitor encountering private violence at the hands of teddy boys in the streets of Weymouth and state violence at a secret government research station. Set in 'the age of senseless violence', it's here screening with several of Losey's recently rediscovered early 60s TV commercials.

Tue 23 June 18:10 NFT3*; Wed 24 June 20:50 NFT1*; Sat 27 June 18:20 NFT1; Sun 28 June 20:40 NFT2 *Introduction by Dylan Cave, BFI National Archive

Eve Eva

France-Italy 1962. With Stanley Baker, Jeanne Moreau, Virna Lisi, Giorgio Albertazzi. 128min. 15

Losey's most ambitious film before *The Servant* was re-cut by its French producers and exists in several mutilated versions. But it's a formidable work of perverse erotic power, transposing James Hadley Chase's pulp novel from LA to Europe, where a weak, dishonest Welsh novelist (Baker) has a destructive affair with a high-class courtesan (Moreau) in a chilly off-season Venice superbly photographed by Gianni Di Venanzo.

Mon 22 June 20:30 NFT1, Wed 24 June 18:10 NFT1*

*Introduction by Clyde Jeavons, film historian and archivist

The Servant

UK 1963. With Dirk Bogarde, James Fox, Wendy Craig, Sarah Miles. 115min

John Dankworth wrote the score – and the song 'All Gone', performed by his wife **Cleo Laine** – for Losey's astute study of class conflict. Taken on as manservant at the upmarket London home of foppish aristocrat Tony (Fox), Barrett (Bogarde) soon exercises a cunning that will undermine his master's assumptions about who's the boss. The precision of Harold Pinter's adaptation of Robin Maugham's novel is matched by Losey's eloquent direction.

Sun 14 June 18:10 NFT1

The Print of A Gun in His Hand courtesy of the Academy Film Archive. *The Boy with Green Hair* has been preserved by The Museum of Modern Art with funding provided by The Film Foundation and The Hollywood Foreign Press Association.

July Programme:

King and Country

UK 1964. With Dirk Bogarde, Tom Courtenay, Leo McKern. 86min. PG

The camera pans around the Charles Jagger reliefs on the Royal Artillery Memorial at Marble Arch to introduce a harsh, humane film made to mark the 50th anniversary of the Great War. With delicate homoerotic undertones that echo Wilfred Owen and the other war poets, it's a tragic tale of an inarticulate private soldier found guilty of desertion and executed in the mud of 1917 Passchendaele, and of his compassionate defending officer who delivers the *coup de grâce*.

Fri 3 July 20:40 NFT2, Wed 8 July 20:40 NFT2

Modesty Blaise

UK 1966. With Monica Vitti, Terence Stamp, Dirk Bogarde. 114min. PG

While Antonioni was in London shooting *Blow-Up*, his iconic star Vitti was playing the eponymous stripcartoon adventuress in this rather less sombre take on Swinging London. Losey's lightest, most exuberant picture, it's a riot of op-art and pop-art, as Modesty and her cockney sidekick (Stamp) tangle across Europe with the effete Bond-style arch-criminal Gabriel (Bogarde) over a consignment of diamonds bound for a rich sheikh.

Sat 4 July 20:30 NFT3, Thu 9 July 20:40 NFT2

Boom!

UK 1968. With Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Noël Coward. 113min

The first, most extravagant of Losey's three films starring Burton and/or Taylor is an adaptation by Tennessee Williams of his baroque play *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*. An allegorical, symbol-ridden piece about a six-times widowed multimillionaire being visited on her bizarrely staffed Mediterranean island fastness by the angel of death in the form of a handsome poet, it's visually and aurally stunning.

Sun 5 July 18:00 NFT1, Fri 10 July 20:45 NFT1

Secret Ceremony

UK 1968. With *Elizabeth Taylor, Robert Mitchum, Mia Farrow, Peggy Ashcroft*. 109min. 15

Losey's flair for the apposite setting is seen in his choice of Peacock House (the astonishing art nouveau mansion built in 1906 for Sir Ernest Debenham in London's Holland Park) as the home of the solitary, passive orphan Cenci (Farrow). There she lures a prostitute (Taylor) to engage in strange games with her stepfather (a bearded Mitchum) and felonious aunts. One of Losey's most elegant, haunting and hermetic movies.

Sun 5 July 20:30 NFT3, Thu 9 July 18:30 NFT2

Figures in a Landscape

UK 1970. With *Robert Shaw, Malcolm McDowell*. 93min

Along with *Modesty Blaise* the only commercial genre movie in Losey's later work, and the first film made from a novel shortlisted for the Booker Prize. An exciting, starkly allegorical thriller, it stars McDowell (fresh from *If...*) and Shaw (who wrote the screenplay) as desperate fugitives pursued across the harsh terrain of an unnamed totalitarian state by soldiers and a helicopter.

Sun 5 July 15:50 NFT3, Sat 11 July 18:20 NFT2

The Go-Between

UK 1971. With *Alan Bates, Julie Christie, Dominic Guard, Michael Redgrave*. 116min. PG. Digital

In the last of Losey's three happy collaborations with Pinter based on novels about socio-sexual tensions in a class-ridden Britain, an innocent boy staying at a grand country house in Edwardian Norfolk becomes the messenger in a clandestine love affair. Losey studied the Norwich School of painters for a detailed, near faultless film to which Bates brought echoes of his recent appearances in adaptations of Lawrence and Hardy, two of the director's favourite writers.

Wed 8 July 18:10 NFT1; Fri 10 July 18:00, NFT1*; Sun 12 July 16:00 NFT1; Thu 16 July 14:30 Studio; Thu 23 July 18:00 NFT1 *Introduction by *Joshua Losey*

The Assassination of Trotsky

France-Italy-UK 1972. With *Richard Burton, Alain Delon, Romy Schneider, Valentina Cortese*. 103min. 15

Losey, a onetime dedicated Stalinist, re-creates the last months of the world-weary Leon Trotsky's Mexican exile in 1940, that concluded with his death at the hands of the ultimate Losey intruder, the enigmatic Soviet killer Frank Jacson (Delon), who infiltrates the great man's fortress. The psychology is more complex than the politics, the *corrida* is used as a metaphor, important questions of art and revolutionary politics are canvassed, and Burton and Delon play magically together.

Sun 12 July 18:00 NFT2, Wed 15 July 18:20 NFT2

A Doll's House

UK-France 1973. With *Jane Fonda, David Warner, Trevor Howard, Delphine Seyrig, Edward Fox*. 106min. PG

Working with playwright David Mercer, Losey cut down, opened up and added a prelude to Ibsen's 1879 play, a work he greatly admired for its criticism of bourgeois values, and shot it largely on location in Norway. Jane Fonda brings her fervent feminism to the role of Nora Helmer, the provincial housewife and mother who finds the courage to rebel against her suffocating marriage. Fonda was frequently at odds with Losey, but the final outcome is impressive.

Sat 11 July 20:40 NFT2, Thu 16 July 18:00 NFT2

Galileo

UK-Canada 1974. With *Topol, Edward Fox, Michel Lonsdale, John Gielgud*. 145min. PG

Losey directed Charles Laughton in the English-language premiere of Brecht's play in Los Angeles in 1947, and this film version uses Laughton's translation. Essentially a theatrical occasion (made for the American Film Theater), it's a great historical debate on individual and intellectual responsibility, presented in a Brechtian manner on a revolving, composite set using Hanns Eisler's original score. Losey thought Topol 'very, very good', and he's surrounded by an outstanding cast.

Sun 12 July 20:10 NFT2, Fri 17 July 18:10 NFT2

The Romantic Englishwoman

UK-France 1975. With *Glenda Jackson, Michael Caine, Helmut Berger, Michel Lonsdale*. 116min. 15

Brittle comedy of middle-class marriage, adapted by Thomas Wiseman and Tom Stoppard from Wiseman's novel, in which German drug-dealing gigolo Helmut Berger pursues the disgruntled wife (Jackson) of a successful, selfregarding British novelist (Caine), who proceeds to weave the putative affair into his current fiction. Losey's last British film before moving to France for the final phase of his career.

Mon 20 July 18:00 NFT2, Sun 26 July 20:40 NFT2

Mr Klein

France-Italy 1976. With *Alain Delon, Jeanne Moreau, Suzanne Flon, Michel Lonsdale, Juliet Berto*. 123min. EST

Losey's first French movie is a cool, masterly Kafkaesque/Borgesian thriller, scripted by the Italian communist Franco Solinas, who wrote *The Battle of Algiers* and as a teenager worked in the French Resistance. The setting is Paris during the German Occupation, and Delon is superb as an unscrupulous gentile antique dealer mistaken for a Jewish fugitive with the same name and drawn into a labyrinthine world of personal and public guilt.

Mon 20 July 20:15 NFT2*, Sun 26 July 18:10 NFT2 *Plus Q&A with Patricia Losey

Les Routes du Sud

France-Spain 1978. With Yves Montand, Miou-Miou, Laurent Malet. 99min. EST

Losey greatly admired Resnais's *La Guerre est finie*, and this gripping political thriller with Oedipal undertones (also scripted by Jorge Semprun) centres on an identical Spanish Republican activist (again played by Montand) working for the anti-Franco underground from Paris. The time is 1975, he's now a successful anti-Stalinist screenwriter, and in this year of Franco's death he, his wife, his estranged son and the son's girlfriend are inexorably drawn to Barcelona. The only Losey film never released in either the UK or the US.

Tue 21 July 20:40 NFT2, Sat 25 July 18:20 NFT2

Don Giovanni

Italy-France-West Germany 1979. With Ruggero Raimondi, John Macurdy, Edda Moser, Kiri Te Kanawa, Teresa Berganza. 184min. EST. PG

For his great, ravishingly beautiful film version of Mozart's opera, Losey assembled a magnificent cast and transposed the action from Spain to Venice and the Veneto, opening in a hellish glass factory in Murano and making extensive use of Palladian architecture. Raimondo is a sallow, diabolical Don, Lorin Maazel conducts the Paris Opera Orchestra, and an epigraph by the Italian socialist Antonio Gramsci establishes the political thrust.

Sun 26 July 14:30 NFT1, Wed 29 July 19:30 NFT1

The Trout La Truite

France 1982. With Isabelle Huppert, Jean-Pierre Cassel, Jeanne Moreau, Alexis Smith. 103min. EST

Losey originally intended to cast Brigitte Bardot in this psychological drama based on Roger Vailland's novel, and 20 years passed before Huppert played the man-hating rural temptress, who marries a gay alcoholic and is drawn into the ruthless world of multinational business. The film cuts in time and place between the Jura, Paris and Japan, and the trout and the trout farm are both real and symbolic. One of Losey's most coldly elegant films.

Mon 27 July 20:45 NFT2, Wed 29 July 17:40 NFT2

Steaming

UK 1985. With Vanessa Redgrave, Sarah Miles, Diana Dors, Patti Love, Brenda Bruce. 95min

In what sadly proved to be his last movie, Losey returned to Britain to film a version of novelist Nell Dunn's somewhat naïve first play, adapted by his wife Patricia. Set in a dilapidated public baths for women, it's a combination of a 1960s work-play (cf Storey's *The Tent*, Wesker's *The Kitchen*) and a feminist confessional piece for a cross-section of women, that turns into an agitprop drama when the regulars unite to save the baths from closure. Losey died before the film opened.

Tue 28 July 18:10 NFT2, Thu 30 July 20:30 NFT3

Booking information

The BFI Southbank is open to all. BFI members are entitled to a discount on all tickets. BFI Southbank Box Office tel: 020 7928 3232. Unless otherwise stated tickets are £8.60, concs £6.25 Members pay £1 less on any ticket. Website www.bfi.org.uk/southbank

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