



PRESS RELEASE September 2009

09/51

BFI and RIBA present:

## Of Dreams and Cities – Architecture and Film

To mark the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the BFI will in November 2009 present **Of Dreams and Cities – Architecture and Film** at BFI Southbank and in the BFI Mediatheques at BFI Southbank, QUAD in Derby and the new Cambridge Central Library.

Architects and architecture have featured in a variety of ways in the cinema, and **Of Dreams and Cities – Architecture and Film** offers a wide range of films, from expressionist silent drama to contemporary documentary, from vintage Hollywood studio fare to European auteur classics and highly personal 'essay films'.

No film season about architecture should omit **The Fountainhead** (1948), perhaps the most famous depiction of an architect – one whose Le Corbusier-like vision is of a future where skyscrapers rule. Other classics with an important if often overlooked architectural component include **Murnau's Sunrise** (1927), with its evocation of the modern metropolis; **Paul Strand's** poetic **Manhattan** (1921); and **Jacques Tati's** comic fable **Playtime** (1967). **Citizen Kane** (1941), **Orson Welles's** dark masterpiece, is rightly famous for its many impressive sets, not least Xanadu, the lavish palace of Charles Foster Kane. **Citizen Kane** will be re-released on an extended run to coincide with the season.

We also feature film as architectural document in lesser known but fascinating works like **Proud City: A Plan for London** (1946), **Twelve Views of Kensal House** (1984) or **A Convenient Truth: Urban Solutions from Curitiba** (2006). **Terence Davies' Of Time and the City** (2008), meanwhile, includes a passionate commentary on the consequences of urban planning. Perhaps no other medium is as adept at capturing the essence of a building, rendered all the more poignant when the original has disappeared or been altered beyond recognition.

A special selection of rare British films and TV documentaries from the BFI National Archive is available to view free of charge in the Mediatheques, including **László Moholy-Nagy's New Architecture at the London Zoo**, and **The Ten Year Plan**, in which *Carry On's* **Charles Hawtrey** gamely promotes the post-war prefab.

The season has been programmed by Geoff Andrew, Head of Film Programme, BFI Southbank and the Mediatheque titles were programmed by Simon McCallum, Curator, BFI Mediatheque. Both are available for interview.

**SOUTHBANK PROGRAMME**

The complete programme at BFI Southbank:

## **EVENTS**

### ***From Chartres to Xanadu (via Citizen Kane)***

Throughout his illustrious career, Orson Welles made highly imaginative use of buildings and sets as a means of enriching not only the moods but the meanings of his films. As part of our 'Of Dreams and Cities...' season, and tying in with our re-release of *Citizen Kane*, Geoff Andrew, Head of Film Programme at BFI Southbank, will give an illustrated talk that explores Welles' use of architecture as a fertile source of cinematic metaphor in all his work, but with special reference to *Citizen Kane*.

**Mon 2 Nov 18:30 NFT3** Tickets £5

### ***A Convenient Truth followed by RIBA Panel Discussion***

USA 2006. Giovanni Baz del Bello. 52min. EST

For 40 years the city of Curitiba has transformed problems into solutions. This inspirational documentary shares ideas for cost effective environmental changes in cities worldwide based on the Curitiba model that has transformed the city into one of the world's most liveable urban spaces. Following the screening we welcome Jaime Lerner, urban planner and three-times mayor of Curitiba and (hopefully) the film's makers into a discussion hosted by Peter Jenkinson OBE of CrunchLab.

**Wed 4 Nov 18:30 NFT1**

### ***RIBA Building Futures 'This House Believes We Have Lost Sight of the Future.'***

Directors have the art of visualising the future nailed. Film can instantly make the utopian tangible, but why has the popular future become such an unobtainable place? Architects once aligned themselves with the future, fusing their visions to political ideals and ambitions for a bolder tomorrow, but where is our contemporary vision coming from? RIBA Building Futures with WIRED magazine host a multidisciplinary evening fusing film, architecture and debate to reveal our ambitions for tomorrow.

**Tue 17 Nov 18:30 NFT1** Tickets £5

## **SCREENINGS**

### ***Los Angeles Plays Itself***

USA 2003. Dir Thom Andersen. 169min.Video

A riveting and hugely enjoyable documentary created from scores of clips from fictional films shot and set in Los Angeles, from which Anderson hopes to find and resurrect the real city. Anderson's own rueful voiceover guides us through this cinematic archaeology in two parts: The City as Background and the City as Subject. Sections on the lost Bunker Hill neighbourhood resonate with contemporary regeneration schemes.

**Fri 6 Nov 19:50 Studio, Sat 7 Nov 15:00 Studio, Sun 8 Nov 14:50 Studio**

### ***A Convenient Truth: Urban Solutions from Curitiba, Brazil***

USA 2006. Giovanni Vaz del Bello. 52min. EST

For 40 years the city of Curitiba has demonstrated how to transform problems into solutions. This inspirational documentary shares ideas for cost-effective environmental changes in cities worldwide based on Curitiba's model, and the transformation of the city into one of the world's most liveable urban spaces.

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### ***Twelve Views of Kensal House***

UK 1984 Peter Wyeth. 55min

Biography of West London's 1936 model estate, echoing the work of Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus in Europe.

**Sun 8 Nov 20:30 NFT2**

### ***My Winnipeg***

Canada 2008. Dir Guy Maddin. With Ann C Savage, Louis Negin, Amy Stewart, Darcy Fehr, Brendan Cade. 80min.12A

Memories and reflections mingle with regret in Maddin's "docu-fantasia" about his Canadian prairie hometown. What spell does a hometown cast over the grown-up child? Maddin mixes animation,

archive footage and recreated scenes of childhood trauma in his usual neo-Soviet style in an attempt to break free.

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***The Fugitive Futurist: A Q-Riosity by "Q"***

1924. Dir Gaston Quiribet. 10min

Futuristic London by way of a 'magic' camera that can see beyond the limits of ordinary life.

**Fri 30 Oct 18:40 NFT3, Sat 31 Oct 16:30 NFT2**

***L'Eclisse***

Italy 1962. Dir Michelangelo Antonioni. With Alain Delon, Monica Vitti, Francisco Rabal, Lilla Brignone. 123min. EST. PG

Using magnificent shots of Rome and its 1950s suburbs initially developed for the Esposizione Universale di Roma (EUR) as a backdrop for a couple's doomed affair, *L'eclisse* completes Michelangelo Antonioni's film trilogy (started with *L'avventura* and *La Notte*) reaching the apotheosis of his modernist style, returning to his favourite themes: individual and societal alienation and the difficulty of finding connections in an increasingly mechanized world.

**Thu 12 Nov 18:00 NFT2, Sun 15 Nov 20:30 NFT3**

***Sketches of Frank Gehry***

USA 2005. Dir Sidney Pollack. 84min. 12A

This examination of the life and career of architect Frank Gehry engenders an emotional narrative in conversations between Gehry and Pollack, and provides an insight into the world of the architect through the rediscovery of early experiences, the potential of new technologies, experimenting on his own home, and bringing an artist and sculptor's sensibility to architecture.

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***Manhatta***

USA 1921. Dir Paul Strand. 7min

The poetry of everyday life in New York City of 1921.

**Sat 14 Nov 18:10 NFT2, Tue 17 Nov 14:00 NFT2\*, Sat 21 Nov 20:45 NFT.** \*Seniors' Matinee

***The Belly of an Architect***

UK 1987. Dir Peter Greenaway. With Brian Dennehy, Chloe Webb, Lamber Wilson, Sergio Fantoni. 118min. 15

American architect Stourley Kracklite arrives in Italy to supervise an exhibition for a French architect, Boullée. Over nine months he becomes obsessed with his belly, suffers stomach pains, and loses his wife, exhibition, his unborn child and his own life. Through metaphors of pregnancy and architecture, Greenaway constructs a poetic visual narrative of Rome that contrasts with the physical and mental decay of the creative individual.

**Sun 15 Nov 18:10 NFT3, Wed 18 Nov 20:40 NFT2\*.** \*Introduced by Ruth Reed, President, RIBA

***Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans***

USA 1927. Dir FW Murnau. With George O'Brien, Janet Gaynor, Margaret Livingston, Bodil Rosing. 94min. U

The seductive city, represented by a murderous vamp, nearly destroys the idyll of two rural innocents. Murnau's first Hollywood film pairs breathtaking studio artifice with the naturalism of an unbearably touching and luminous Janet Gaynor. Working with the best on the Fox lot (Edward Ulmer, Charles Rosher, Karl Struss) Murnau offered up a gorgeous, groundbreaking masterpiece of visual, thematic and moral contrasts.

**Wed 11 Nov 18:30 NFT, Sun 15 Nov 15:50 NFT2**

***The Fountainhead***

USA 1949. Dir King Vidor. With Gary Cooper, Raymond Massey, Patricia Neal, Kent Smith. 112min. U  
Based on Ayn Rand's 1943 novel expounding her "individualism" philosophy, *The Fountainhead* uses architecture as a stage for the struggle between modernity and tradition, with the ambition of humankind winning over doubt and convention. Howard Roark is an idealistic architect who struggles in obscurity rather than compromise his artistic and personal vision. The film follows his battle to practise modern architecture despite an establishment focused on the worship of tradition.

**Tue 17 Nov 20:30 NFT3, Sat 21 Nov 15:40 NFT2**

### **Model Shop**

France-USA 1968. Dir Jacques Demy. With Anouk Aimee, Gary Lockwood, Alexandra Hay, Carol Cole, Tome Fielding. 95min.

Filming in English for Columbia, Demy brings a sadder but no wiser Lola to a Los Angeles not usually depicted on screen: drab, enervating, industrial. A ravishing though tired Anouk Aimee works in a tawdry pay-to-photo "model shop" where she meets 'Nam-bound burn out architect Gary Lockwood. Distances and barriers abound: an alienatingly spread-out Los Angeles, emotional and geographical distance, the model shop cameras. Cult band Spirit play themselves.

**Sun 22 Nov 15:50 NFT3, Tue 24 Nov 20:40 NFT2**

### **Of Time and the City**

UK 2008. Dir Terence Davies. 72min. Digital. 12A.

The golden moments pass, and leave no trace. Chekhov, Mahler and Peggy Lee underpin a melancholy eulogy for the people and places of a vanished Liverpool by way of a journey into Davies' past. Davies' rich narration links archival images with his homosexual self-actualisation, the terrors of Catholicism, his loathing of the Fab Four, the Betty Windsor show, and the heartlessness of post-war planning policy.

### **Playtime**

France 1967. Dir Jacques Tati. with Jacques Tati, Barbara Dennek, Rita Maiden, France Rumilly. 124min. U  
The familiar sites of Paris have been replaced by a grey Miesian steel and glass nightmare (not that it bothers Tati's American tourists). Hulot bumbles through the unfamiliar city, meeting the tourists, and getting caught in a melee at a club. Tati built a giant cityscape set (Tatville) to illustrate the soullessness of modern architecture and modern French life. *Playtime* bankrupted Tati and effectively ended his career.

**Fri 27 Nov 20:30 NFT3, Sun 29 Nov 15:00 NFT1**

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### **Proud City: A Plan for London**

UK 1946. Dir Ralph Keene. 26min. Video

The original LCC project for the replanning and building of London explained by two architects responsible for the plan, Sir Patrick Abercrombie and JH Forshaw.

**Thu 19 Nov 14:30 NFT2, Fri 20 Nov 20:50 Studio, Sat 21 Nov 18:40 Studio, Sun 22 Nov 16:20, 18:40 Studio, Tue 24 Nov 20:50 Studio, Wed 25 Nov 20:50 Studio, Thu 26 Nov 20:50 Studio**

### **Mr Blandings Builds His Dream House**

USA 1948. Dir HC Potter. Cary Grant, Myrna Loy, Melvyn Douglas, Reginald Denny, Sharyn Moffat. 93min. U

Advertising executive Cary Grant dreams of escaping the cramped city with Myrna Loy and the kids. Led up the garden path by architects, engineers and builders, the titular dream house in the suburbs turns out to be an insanely troublesome money pit. Recently remade with Ice Cube, which proves that the American suburban dream continues to flim flam and trip up the unwary.

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### **Architectural Millinery**

1954. Dir Sidney Petersen. 10min

**Wed 25 Nov 18:00 NFT1, Sat 28 Nov 15:20 NFT1**

## **FROM THE BFI NATIONAL ARCHIVE/BFI MEDIATHEQUE COLLECTIONS**

To celebrate the RIBA's 175th year and BFI Southbank's Architecture in Film season, the Mediatheques will showcase *Of Dreams and Cities*, a collection that brings together a special selection of archive rarities, offering a uniquely British perspective on our built environment.

The 20th century saw a great upheaval in the planning and design of British towns, cities and homes, fuelled by overcrowding and the privations of war. This collection includes documentary portraits of architects (**Arena: Berthold Lubetkin**, 1989) and architectural styles (**Trellick Tower**, 1991), but also looks at how we use public spaces (*Lido*, 1995) and how artists have re-imagined them (**Borderline**, 2005). Despite our love affair with the Victorian terrace, 1930s' architectural ideals loom large in newsreels and documentaries (**An Ultra Modern House**, 1931 and Moholy-Nagy's **New Architecture at the London Zoo**, 1937), feature films (H.G. Wells' prescient sci-fi fable **Things to Come**, 1936), and nostalgic evocations of the period (**England Home and Beauty**, 1976).

## **Ten to try**

### **Kensington Calling! (1930)**

Squalid conditions in Kensington – and a bid for a brighter future.

### **Kensal House (1937)**

A visionary community powered by the miracle of gas.

### **The Ten Year Plan (1945)**

Charles Hawtrey promotes the utilitarian wonder of the prefab.

### **Charley in New Town (1948)**

Suburban utopia explained in Halas & Batchelor's animated guide for townies.

### **Living Architects: Denys Lasdun (1971)**

The architect discusses his controversial vision for the National Theatre.

### **Omnibus (1982)**

Bob Hoskins offers his unvarnished opinion on the architectural dilemmas facing the South Bank.

### **Building Sights: Byker Wall Newcastle (1988)**

Beatrix Campbell explores a 20<sup>th</sup> century 'walled city'.

### **The Changing Face of Camberwell (1963)**

Post-war progress in a South London borough.

### **South Bank (1964)**

Look out for the National Film Theatre in this tour of the Thames' ever-changing architectural landscape.

### **Look at Life: High Living (1968)**

The only way is up: the 1960s' answer to Britain's booming population.

For a list of all titles currently available in the Mediatheque see [www.bfi.org.uk/mediatheque](http://www.bfi.org.uk/mediatheque)

# RIBA Trust

2009 marks the 175th anniversary of the founding of the RIBA. To celebrate this milestone the Institute has developed special events to be held throughout the year that aim to show the breadth of the RIBA's activities throughout the world of architecture, engage an even wider public and celebrate the benefits to society of good design. For further information visit [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)

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#### **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](http://www.bfi.org.uk/southbank)

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.