

q film: 2020 FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL

2020 welcomes both a new decade and the sparkling 31st edition of the Alliance Française French Film Festival. In keeping with such a momentous year, this beloved event will once again unveil a thrilling selection of contemporary French cinema, guaranteed to captivate and stimulate audiences around the country.



Presented by the Alliance Française in association with the Embassy of France in Australia and Unifrance Films, the 2020 season will screen at Palace Cinemas and affiliate locations progressively from 10 March until 19 April, encompassing 8 cities and 4 satellite locations. Celebrating his 4th year as Artistic Director, Philippe Platel, has spent the past 12 months reviewing hundreds of films in order to select the superlative array of 49 features and documentaries, along with 2 thrilling television shows, that form this year's programme – many of which will be screening in Australia for the first time.

Showcased via 9 distinct categories with expressively piquant headings such as 'Eternal Odyssey,' 'Intense & Unsettling,' 'The Voice of the Countryside,' 'Magnetic Love,' and 'City of Lights,' the 2020 line-up has a strong emphasis on social engagement and altruistic endeavours. These qualities are depicted in films such as the multi-award-winning *Les Misérables*, Ladj Ly's searing snapshot of corruption and simmering tensions in modern-day Paris; *School Life*, a comedy/drama set within a Saint Denis high school; *Invisibles*, which follows the unorthodox antics taken by an illegal women's shelter to avoid closure; *Oh Mercy!*, a darkly compelling exposé of the human condition as observed by a police chief in Northern France; the poignant rural drama, *In the Name of the Land*, starring Guillaume Canet as a farmer battling to maintain his dignity in the face of incessant setbacks, and many more extraordinary films.

In times of social, environmental and political uncertainty, cinema also looks to heroic figures for inspiration, a trend which is echoed via themes ranging from space travel (*Proxima* and *How to Become an Astronaut*); fairytale princes (*The Lost Prince* and *Donkey Skin*), political leaders (*Alice and the Mayor and Savages*); submarine soldiers (*The Wolf's Call*) and spirits (*Zombi Child*).

High on the list of 2020 highlights is the international premiere of director Martin Provost's *How to Be a Good Wife*. Set at a time when women were still expected to be largely subservient, this delicious comedy stars the luminous Juliette Binoche as the pristine head of a housekeeping school who, when faced with adversity, takes her first steps towards emancipation.

There's also the hotly anticipated *La Belle Époque*, which tells the story of Victor (Daniel Auteuil) a disillusioned man who is given the opportunity to relive the great love-affair of his youth, and the whimsically romantic *Notre-Dame* – shot before last year's horrific fire - about an architect who wins a competition to redesign the Notre-Dame esplanade – a movie which, given events of the past year, is now considered visionary.

Breathing life into this cinematic cornucopia will be a host of France's most electrifying actors, including Fanny Ardant, Vincent Cassel, Romain Duris, Emmanuelle Bercot, Bérénice Bejo, Jean Dujardin, Fabrice Luchini, Noémie Lvovsky, Eva Green, Jacques Perrin, Gaspard Ulliel, Roshdy Zem, Léa Seydoux, Yolande Moreau, Xavier Dolan, Virginie Efira, Sandrine Kiberlain, François Cluzet, Gilles Lellouche, Laurent Lafitte, Christophe Lambert, Mathieu Kassovitz, Virginie Ledoyen and Ludvine Sagnier, who will feature in films directed by, amongst others, Christophe Honoré, Zabou Breitman, Xavier Dolan, Martin Provost, Olivier Nakache, Éric Toledano, Guillaume Canet, Erwan Le Duc, Rémi Bezançon, André Téchiné, Cédric Kahn, Dominik Moll, Arnaud Desplechin, Cédric Klapisch, Michel Hazanavicius, and Yvan Attal.

And in celebration of its 50th anniversary, the Festival will present a restored version of the aforementioned, *Donkey Skin*, a luscious fairy-tale musical from legendary New-Wave director Jacques Demy, featuring a soundtrack by Michel Legrand and starring the eternal Catherine Deneuve who headlines four films in this year's programme.

National dates and venues for the 2020 Alliance Française French Film Festival are on the festivals website - listed below - along with how to stay in touch on social media.:

W: <http://www.affrenchfilmfestival.org> F: <https://www.facebook.com/AFFrenchFilmFestivalAus>
I: https://www.instagram.com/af_fff_aus T: https://twitter.com/af_fff_aus Hashtag: #af_fff_aus