

MEDIA RELEASE

French cinema par excellence: Catch the new, the classics and the yet-to-be released at the French Film Festival

The festival presents its largest line up of 37 films across varied genres that you can enjoy in the theatres and in the comfort of your own home

20 October 2020, Singapore - The French Film Festival returns from 6 to 22 November 2020, with its biggest line-up of 37 feature films. Presented as part of the vOilah! France Singapore Festival 2020, the longest-running foreign film festival in Singapore continues to celebrate the best of French storytelling and share them with local movie-goers.

“French cinema holds an important place in our hearts and over the past editions of French Film Festival, we have seen many locals grow a greater appreciation for it. With our specially curated selection of films this year, the biggest ever, we hope to showcase the sensitive and beautiful elements of French storytelling, delving into topics that expose the vulnerabilities that make us human,” said the Ambassador of France to Singapore, Marc Abensour. “We are thankful for our faithful partners who have come onboard to make the French Film Festival the best experience for everyone – for the first time both in theatres and on line – and we hope that the stories from this edition will continue to excite and inspire film enthusiasts.”

Powerful stories, led by powerful women

The festival’s line up of 37 films captures the diversity of French cinema that is expressed through a kaleidoscope of genres from emotional drama films to irreverent comedies, and fantastical animated movies for kids to hard-hitting documentaries.

Following the special selection of films last year that cast a spotlight on the role of empowered women in French cinema, more than half of the films in this year’s line-up is either produced by a female director or follows the story of strong female characters. Collectively, these films are a testament to the growing ways women are asserting themselves in the cinema industry, through roles that go beyond the film cliches of being a damsel in distress.

Opening the festival is ***Mama Weed***, starring celebrated Academy Award-nominated actress Isabelle Huppert. Based on Hannelore Cayre’s popular novel, Huppert plays the role of a French-Arabic translator working for the anti-drug squad in Paris, who crosses over to the other side and becomes an untypical drug dealer. The film spotlights the relationships of an intricate network of women who are forced into a grey area of choosing between survival and following their morals.



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Another highlight is **Aline, The Voice of Love**, which is inspired by the career and life of Céline Dion, one of the best-selling artists of all time. This heartfelt film follows her journey to superstar-dom starting from her humble beginnings in Canada to her incredible success today. Actress Valérie Lemercier, who also directed the film, puts on a great performance as Aline in this inspirational, light-hearted story.

20 movies from 2020

This year, fans of French cinema are in for a treat as the French Film Festival will feature 20 new movies that are fresh from the box office in France, including some which have yet to be released. This gives local audiences the unique opportunity to experience the new wave of contemporary, ground-breaking innovation in French storytelling ahead of the rest of the world.

One of such is **A Friendly Tale**, a thought-provoking comedy that premiered in France in September that sheds light on the pursuit of happiness in the real world, and how success may not necessarily translate into inner contentment. It tells the story of awakened jealousies and tested loyalties among friends and family, after a woman finds success in writing a bestselling novel. Directed by French filmmaker Daniel Cohen, the film is led by an ensemble of internationally-recognised French actors including Vincent Cassel, who has starred in Hollywood hit *Ocean's Twelve* and *Ocean's Thirteen*, and Oscar nominee Bérénice Bejo, who starred in the award-winning film *The Artist*. Daniel Cohen will participate in a live Q&A session with the public of Alliance Française on 11 November after the 7:00pm screening. The session will also be live streamed on social media.



A Friendly Tale tells the story how loyalties are tested among friends and family, after a woman finds success in writing a bestselling novel

Making an international premiere at the French Film Festival is **The Big Hit**, which is due for a theatrical release in France this December. Based on a real-life event, the film tells the story of Etienne, an actor past his prime who takes on the challenge of directing a group of inmates from a high security prison. An official selection at this year's Cannes International Film Festival, audiences can look forward to the stellar performance that brings the unique relationships between the characters to life.



The Big Hit tells the story of Etienne, a successful stage director and actor past his prime who takes on the challenge of directing a group of inmates from a high security prison

Other films to look out for at the French Film Festival includes the coming of age film **Summer of 85**, and the drama *Love Affairs* who are part of the official selection at the Cannes Film Festival 2020. Audiences can also enjoy the historical biopic **De Gaulle**, that follows General Charles De Gaulle as he decides to lead the Free French Forces against Nazi Germany during World War II; or follow a fantastical love story of **The Mermaid in Paris**, in which a man crosses path with an injured mermaid along the River Seine in Paris..

An expanded partnership with a new online offering

These internationally acclaimed films will be presented at the Shaw Theatres, who have been a long supporting partner of the French Film Festival together with Alliance Française de Singapour, Gardens by the Bay and The Projector. In an expanded partnership with Shaw Theatres, audiences are now able to catch their favourite films from the line-up at Paya Lebar Quarter, on top of Lido.

Apart from new films, The Projector will also be presenting a line of critically-acclaimed French classics **Cleo from 5 to 7**, **Contempt** and **The Umbrellas of Cherbourg**. These films are specially selected by The Projector to provoke thoughts and conversations around important issues in our society, and to introduce the golden-era of La Nouvelle Vague in the 1960s to Singaporeans.



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In addition, the festival will also be offering '**The Best of French Film Festival**' for the first time this year. This section is presented by both Shaw Theatres and The Projector as a specially curated selection of 12 films from the current and past editions of the festival that people can enjoy in the comforts of their own home.

Shaw Theatres will present seven hits which includes the opening film of French Film Festival 2017 - ***Back to Burgundy***, a drama by acclaimed director Cédric Klapisch about estranged siblings who took over the family vineyard in the scenic Burgundy countryside. The Projector will also screen five favourites including ***Fanny's Journey***, a family film that follows a group of brave Jewish children as they attempt to escape Nazi-occupied France.

These films are hosted on each presenter's virtual cinema platforms, KinoLounge and The Projector Plus respectively starting from 6 November. Details of all the films for French Film Festival can be found in the annex.

For more information on the French Film Festival, please refer to www.voilah.sg.

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About the French Film Festival

The French Film Festival returns from 6 to 22 November 2020. Organised by the Embassy of France in Singapore, in collaboration with local distributors and partners, the Festival will feature its biggest lineup comprising 37 latest feature films for everyone through a diverse genre of films including comedy, drama and classics that people can enjoy in the cinemas, and in the comfort of their own homes.

About vOilah! France Singapore Festival

vOilah! France Singapore Festival 2020 returns from 22 October to 22 November 2020. Presented by the Embassy of France in Singapore, the festival, opened in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the visits to Singapore by Georges Clemenceau, the former French premier, is placed under the symbolism of resilience throughout history.

This year, there are about 50 programmes covering culture, education, science and lifestyle, expressing France's true friendship with Singapore in good times as well as hard times. Due to its hybrid format, vOilah! 2020 is an experimentation field for new event formats and will promote, more than ever, innovative collaborations between our countries, thanks to the support of 110 partners from France and Singapore.

For more information, visit www.voilah.sg