



THE BADLANDS COLLECTIVE
& *A Nos Amours*
PRESENT

AN ARROW FILMS RELEASE

JACQUES RIVETTE'S
OUT 1

PRINCE CHARLES CINEMA
28-29 NOVEMBER, 2015

The Badlands Collective & A Nos Amours present
an Arrow Films release
at the Prince Charles Cinema

Jacques Rivette's
OUT 1



In the run up to this screening - only the second time the film has been shown in the UK - much of the focus has been on the rarity, enormity and importance of *Out 1*. The film's reputation precedes it; having been very difficult to see since its premiere in 1971, Jacques Rivette's masterpiece has, over the years, acquired a mythical status among serious film lovers - it was, according to the New York Times, "the cinephile's holy grail." But as we sit down today to actually watch the film, daunted perhaps by the journey in front of us, how do we separate the picture from its mythical history and immerse ourselves in majesty of the work itself?

The first couple of chapters are unquestionably the most demanding, but they are integral to understanding the film's world. There are two theatre groups, both rehearsing plays by Aeschylus; one is approaching the text in a more traditional way, whereas the other is attacking the material with experimental zeal - all chanting, shouting and warbling. The conceit of the rehearsing troupes is prevalent throughout Rivette's work - from *Paris nous appartient* (1961) to *La Bande des quatre* (1988), but its use in *Out 1* is arguably the most intriguing.

The two groups embody the duality of Rivette as a filmmaker. This bifurcation was beautifully articulated by Jonathan Rosenbaum: "Every Rivette film has its Eisenstein/Lang/Hitchcock side - an impulse to design and plot, dominate and control - and its Renoir/Hawks/Rossellini side: an impulse to 'let things go', open one's self up to the play and power of other personalities, and watch what happens." In *Out 1*, this idea begins with the competing troupes and runs throughout the film. It is the key to understanding the picture.

It is difficult to overstate just how happy we are to be able to finally screen *Out 1* in the cinema. It is a programmer's dream both for its rarity and adventurousness, and we are delighted to be able to share it with you. In the current film culture, where the focus is always on what's coming around the corner, what a luxury it is to be able to dedicate two days to one of the great cinematic works of the twentieth century. The picture romanticises the notion of the collective, loosely connected by artistic drives, and this is an idea that is at the forefront of our minds as we all sit together in a room to embark on this journey. Cinema is about the communal, and we hope that this weekend will be a testament to that.

As we prepare to spend almost 13 hours in the Paris of 1971 - a city still reeling from the failed revolution of May 1968 - it's hard not to reflect on the attacks which happened a fortnight ago. In *Out 1*, the anxieties of the age are represented by the ominous, omnipresent secret society referred to as The Thirteen. In Honoré de Balzac's collection of novellas *The History of the Thirteen* - a key influence on this film - The Thirteen encapsulated the uncertain transition into the post-Napoleonic era. In *Out 1*, they are the embodiment of post-'68 malaise. In both cases, life beats on in spite of any conspiracy and, watching *Out 1* today, the anxieties of the time may have evolved, but the message remains - Paris prevails.

Throughout his work, Rivette's Paris is a puzzle to be solved by his protagonists. The mysteries of the city may always be elusive, but it's art which brings his characters closer to them, be it the novels of Balzac or the plays of Racine. For Rivette, each person is a cog in the great machinery of the city - it is the beauty, the romance and the miracle of life itself which drives it. Whatever happens, 'La Comédie humaine' continues and life endures.

The Badlands Collective / A Nos Amours, November 2015

DAY 1 - SATURDAY 28 NOVEMBER

09:00 Doors open
09:15 Episodes 1 - 2
(199 minutes with a 10-minute break in between)

12:45 Intermission (40 minutes)

13:25 Episodes 3 - 4
(215 minutes with a 15-minute break in between)
17:15 End of Day 1

DAY 2 - SUNDAY 29 NOVEMBER

09:30 Doors open

09:50 Intro
10:00 Episodes 5 - 6 (190 minutes)

13:10 Intermission (60 minutes)

14:10 Episodes 7 - 8 (171 minutes)
17:15 End of Day 2

Parsing Out 1: A conversation between Craig Williams and Phil Concannon of The Badlands Collective

CRAIG: Phil, we both consider *Out 1* to be a major work, but sitting down to watch it for the first time is an undoubtedly daunting experience, even for seasoned Rivette fans. What do you think is the best way in?

PHIL: I think it's no coincidence that Colin becomes obsessed with a game of Patience during the course of the film. Patience is important virtue for any viewers approaching *Out 1*, along with an open mind and a sense of curiosity and adventure. The film front-loads its most challenging passages into the opening two episodes and you have to really surrender to it, and allow the film to lead you down its own paths. *Out 1* doesn't adhere to any familiar rhythm or structure and so the film asks us to readjust our expectations of what cinematic storytelling should look and feel like. There are rich rewards on offer, especially in the film's second half, for any viewers willing to invest the time in getting to know these characters and exploring this world.

But is *Out 1* just valuable just a document of a particular time and place, or does it have relevance and resonance for a 2015 audience?

CRAIG: While the film - like so many of the pictures made by the French New Wave directors in the late 60s and early 70s - specifically deals with the anxieties of the young generation disappointed by the failed revolution of May 1968, I think its vision of that landscape is opaque enough to invite many readings. The central ideas at its heart - from the romantic notion of the artistic collective to the invisible forces that guide our lives - are just as relevant now as they were in 1971. What endures for me is that notion of the artistic process as its own life force.

I find the idea of art as the key to the city so powerful in Rivette's films. How do you think this idea works in *Out 1*?

PHIL: The city becomes an increasing presence during the course of *Out 1*. After spending a couple of hours inside messy and noisy rehearsal rooms with groups of actors, there's a wonderful sense of liberation as the action moves out into the streets. Different forms of art and culture are always acting as a guide for the characters; Colin seeks clues in literature to navigate his way around the city, while most of Frédérique's behaviour appears to be filtered through cinematic models. There's also the sense of Paris being a vast labyrinth, as in his later *Le Pont du Nord*, with secrets and puzzles to be discovered around every corner. The characters all take different approaches to exploring the city, some hit the streets and accost members of the public for information while others, like Quentin, attempt to take a more logical approach and divide the city into mathematical quadrants. Throughout a number of Rivette's films there is this sense of life being a game, but there are dangers for the players too, with Frédérique's complete immersion in a world of roleplaying, trickery and fantasy exposing her most often to genuine threat.

Out 1 is frequently discussed in terms of its duration, structure and performance, but what about its formal qualities? How do you think the film is distinguished by Rivette's directorial approach?

CRAIG: Stylistically, it feels to me like the apex of his more improvisatory phase. We have the intimate rehearsal sequences where the camera is in among the clatter, drawing us into the action. This feels like an extension of similar sequences from *Paris nous appartient* and *Lamour fou* (which acknowledged the intimacy by creating a secondary point of view in the form of the film crew.) The real innovation in *Out 1* is the way he extends this technique, both in terms of geographical scope and stylistic experimentation. By using the same approach for the exterior scenes, we get a sense of the chaos surrounding the characters; the improvisatory style means that the reality outside the film's purview seeps in, like the baffled members of the public looking into the lens of the camera. It makes everyone - the actors and the wider public - complicit in the narrative. I also love how *Out 1* is Rivette at his most sonically and visually experimental, with the distortion, clipped sound and extended shots through mirrors.

To conclude, *Out 1* may be daunting, but it's a fun, absorbing and hugely rewarding experience. I'm confident that our audience today will remember this weekend as one of the key cinematic events of their lives.

FIND US ONLINE

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