

#10 THE CLASSIC

AUTUMN 2023

A free magazine about classic photography



PARIS PHOTO

GEORGE HOYNINGEN-HUENE ESTATE ARCHIVES

LES IMAGES - Photography of French Cinema

HANS P. KRAUS, JR.

BEHIND THE SCENES - Curating and Designing Exhibitions

BY MICHAEL DIEMAR

LES PHOTOGRAPHY OF FRENCH CINEMA IMAGES

Those familiar with the photography market in France will also be aware that cinema-related photography has a much more prominent role there than in other countries. There are special auctions of cinema images, several dealers, including ZK Images and Vincent Scali, and Lumière des Roses and other French exhibitors at Paris Photo will sometimes have rarities of cinema photography in their presentations.

Christophe Goeury, the independent photography specialist, is among the key players in the market and tells me:

– France has had an important role in the development of cinema, whether it's the early experiments of Étienne–Jules Marey, the Lumière Brothers who put cinema on the screen, the innovations of the so-called Impressionist directors Abel Gance and Marcel L'Herbier, the “poetic realism” of the 1930s, or La Nouvelle Vague, The New Wave, which emerged in the 1950s. It all adds to an interest in the “patrimoine”, the heritage, and the collector's market.

And with regards to the “patrimoine”, there is the towering figure of Henri Langlois, who co-founded the Cinémathèque Française in 1936, and took it upon himself to preserve the medium's history.

The American director Nicholas Ray once described Langlois' legacy as “perhaps the most important individual effort ever accomplished in the history of cinema.”



“Saving the heritage”. Henri Langlois, co-founder of the Cinémathèque, 1970s. Photo by Jack Robinson/Hulton Archive/Getty Images.

Goeury started organising auctions of cinema photography over 20 years ago.

– There were several reasons why I took the initiative. I had a deep passion for “the Seventh art”, as cinema is called in France, and a good knowledge of the history of the medium. As a photography specialist, I was acutely aware of the low value given to cinema photographs in the vintage photography market. They were simply not valued as a collector’s items. There were only a few dealers at the time and they were operating in the very narrow world of movie buffs. The prices for cinema photographs were either ridiculously low, or extremely high, unjustifiably so. They also offered other material, posters, magazines, books on cinema, mostly to cinephiles looking for images of their favourite films, actors and actresses.

How did you bring cinema photography into the auction world?

– Based on my observations, I decided to introduce cinema photography to the serious photography market but from a different angle. To place cinema

photography in a broader dimension than the purely commercial exploitation of the images that had been made to promote the films. From the moment when the image became more important than the film, I could value it as a collectable image, on the same level as classic photography. Thus, I was able to present to collectors of my acquaintance, buyers of classic photography, a strong selection of cinema photographs. The bridge was being built. It was the beginning of the creation of a market for the collection of “pure” cinema photography. And it’s interesting to note that in cinema photography, we find the major themes of classic photography: the portrait, the nude, fashion, architecture, surrealism, graphic design, modernity, photomontage, staging, the decisive moment, and reportage.

While images were taken straight from the films for press use, there are many memorable images of French cinema that don’t actually appear in the films. They were taken during production, of quickly arranged setups, or on the fly, by skilled photographers such as Boris Lipnitzki



“It’s a wonderful mode of transport!” Georges Méliès in *Le Royaume des Fées* (*The Kingdom of the Fairies*), released 1906. Hand coloured gelatin silver print. Collection of Christophe Goeury.



“Remembering the Battle of Toulon”. Albert Dieudonné as Napoleon. For the finale of his epic, Abel Gance employed Polyvision, a widescreen format of his own invention, a precursor to Cinerama 25 years later. Courtesy of BFI.

who photographed Abel Gance’s *Napoleon* and Raymond Cauchetier who shot extensively for Jean-Luc Godard and the directors of *La Nouvelle Vague*.

– Yes, indeed. Another example is the film *Les Portes de la nuit* made by Marcel Carné in 1946. The images taken by Raymond Voinquel, Roger Forster and G.R. Aldo are as strong as those Brassai published in *Paris de Nuit*. They have a real aesthetic value, in composition, staging, and light, going beyond the simple image to be used in the promotion of a film. And there were many other great photographers who took images on film sets, people like Roger Corbeau, Limot, Sacha Masour, and abroad, there were Eve Arnold, René Burri, Bruce Davidson, Robert Capa, Philippe Halsman and Ernst Haas.

In addition to general auctions of cinema photography, you have also organised auctions of some very important private collections.

– There are three that immediately come to mind, the Nelly Kaplan collection, the André Bernard collection on French cinema photography, and the collection of Gérard Troussier, the pioneering dealer in cinema photography in France. For each of these collections, I produced a catalogue and they have over time become reference literature in the market for cinema photography in France. Those three sales also aroused a great deal of interest among collectors of classic photography, both 19th & 20th century.

Nelly Kaplan was confidant and lover of director Abel Gance. She also made a documentary in 1984, *Abel Gance et son Napoléon*.

– Yes, and she had a lot of Abel Gance material. The sale of the collection took place in two stages. The first catalogue, I titled with a quote from Gance: “The time for the image has come.” For the second, I used another quote from him: “I don’t absorb, I refract.” Those catalogues were aimed not only at a very broad spectrum of traditional photography collectors, but also at young future collectors. The objective – to seduce them in three ways: the

“image” as it is, the attraction of the film and, finally, an attractive price for the acquisition of a silver vintage print.

What changes have you seen in the market over the years?

– In many ways, it now mirrors the general market for vintage photography so it’s the vintage print that is sought after. The highest prices relate to “primitive cinema”, pioneers like Georges Méliès, the 1920s with German expressionism and French impressionism, then the avant-garde, like René Clair’s *Entr’acte*, Dali and Buñuel’s *Un Chien Andalou* and Jean Cocteau’s *Le Sang d’un poète* (*The Blood of a Poet*). Prices for such prints vary from 1000 to 3000 euros but can go much higher if the image is particularly desirable. The interesting thing is, there’s still some incredible material that suddenly emerges as if out of nowhere, especially of French cinema. But then of course, the history of French cinema is very rich.

Goeury comments that cinema had a long germination. It started with shadow puppetry, followed by magic lanterns, phantasmagoria, optical devices such as the phenakistoscope, the thaumatrope, and the zoetrope. Following the launches of Daguerre’s and Fox Talbot’s processes in 1839, the chase was on to freeze movement. But it wasn’t until 1878, when Eadweard Muybridge, after years of experiments, using a high-speed electronic shutter of his own design, and 12 tripwire cameras, was able to freeze the motions of a galloping horse. In France, scientist Étienne-Jules Marey, had begun his own investigations into movement in 1869. He took great interest in Muybridge’s movement studies and in 1882, invented a chronophotographic gun, capable of taking 12 consecutive frames per second.

Photographic plates were the norm, until 1889, when George Eastman launched the first film, to be used with the Kodak camera. There were soon attempts on both sides of the Atlantic to use the film



"The Terror". Abel Gance's epic *Napoleon*, Georges Couthon (Louis Vionelly) with his pet rabbit, Maximilien Robespierre (Edmond Van Daële) and St Just, played by director Abel Gance. **Boris Lipnitzki**. Gelatin silver print, annotated by Abel Gance, 1927. Collection of the author.

to capture moving images, but Thomas Edison was the first to invent a camera that used perforated celluloid film, the Edison Kinetograph camera, developed 1889-1892. In 1894, Edison launched the Kinetoscope, a device designed for films to be viewed by one person at a time through a peephole.

The French brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière were the first to put cinema on the screen. Unlike Edison's cumbersome devices, the Lumière Cinématographe was portable, a combination of camera, printer and a projector, that could be operated by one person and without electricity. They presented their first screening for a paying audience on 28 December 1895, 10 short films, including *La Sortie de l'Usine Lumière à Lyon*, of workers leaving the Lumière factory, and in January the following year, *L'arrivée d'un train en gare de la Ciotat*, with a train moving directly towards the camera.

The films caused a sensation, in France and abroad. The brothers soon dispatched teams of camera operators to Russia, China, the Middle East, North and South America, to screen films and record films. Much to the consternation of prospective

filmmakers, the brothers initially refused to sell the Cinématographe. Whereupon Georges Méliès, master illusionist and owner of the Théâtre Robert-Houdin in Paris, decided to build his own camera. Méliès has been described as the first real star of cinema, producing and acting in around 520 films between 1896 and 1914. Using a variety of techniques, stop-motion, double exposures, substitution slices, dissolves, and time lapse photography, he created films that combined fantasy, humour, the absurd, whether he depicted extraordinary transformations of the human body or almost surreal journeys, as in *Le Voyage dans la Lune* (*A Trip to The Moon*, 1902) or *Le Royaume des Fées* (*The Kingdom of the Fairies*, 1906).

But it was for others to establish cinema as a business. In 1896, Charles and Émile Pathé founded Pathé Frères. The company quickly expanded, manufacturing cameras, projectors and raw film stock for a worldwide market, as well as producing its own films. Pathé Frères' main competitor was Gaumont, founded in 1896 by Léon Gaumont. Between them, Pathé Frères and Gaumont effectively established the structure of the global film

business. And France was the leading player. By 1910, roughly 65 percent of all films distributed around the world were produced in the Parisian film studios. Ten years later, with the growth of Hollywood, the French studios had not only lost their global dominance, they had just 10 percent of their home market.

But French film would find its own way. Unlike the US, where cinema was regarded as “entertainment for the uneducated classes”, there was a sophisticated audience in France, keen to see where this new medium would go. Colette wrote reviews for the magazine *Le Film*, founded in 1916, with Louis Delluc, author, drama critic, soon-to-be film director, as editor. Delluc went on to publish his own magazine, *Cinéa*, the name giving birth to the word “cinéaste”. He also came up with the concept of “photogénie”. Delluc was passionate about film, asking “What is cinema? What can it be?” He became a central figure in the revival of the French industry, a propagandist for a group of directors, Abel Gance, Marcel L’Herbier, Jean Epstein, Germaine Dulac and himself, whom he dubbed “Impressionists”. The term was not a visual description. Delluc chose it to differentiate their films from the Expressionist films made in Germany by Fritz Lang, Robert Wiene, F. W. Murnau and others.

Film historians have struggled to find unifying elements in the films of the Impressionists, except that they saw cinema as a vehicle for their personal visions. Abel Gance made the powerful anti-war film *J’Accuse* (1919), *La Roue* (*The Wheel*, 1922), and the epic, *Napoleon* (1927). Running nearly 7 hours, it was packed with ideas and new techniques, including fast cutting, multiple exposure, superimposition, kaleidoscope images, and at the end, Polyvision, a widescreen format of his own invention, a precursor to Cinerama 25 years later.

With *L’Inhumaine* (*The Inhuman Woman*, 1924) Marcel L’Herbier created the very first style film. The story, a mix of melodrama and science fiction, is centred on a heartless singer, Claire Lescot, and her lover, engineer Einar Norsen. L’Herbier saw the film as a way of synthesising all the arts, and to create an introduction to the exhibition Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industrie Moderne (which much later gave name to the style Art Deco), due to open in 1925. He enlisted Fernand Léger to design Norsen’s lab, while architect Robert Mallet-Stevens designed the house exteriors. Though striking in its style, L’Herbier’s finest moment came in 1928, with the film *L’Argent*, based on Émile Zola’s novel of the same name, about the corrupting influence of money, the setting changed to present-day Paris, portraying the world of banking and the stock market.



“The first style movie”. The engineer in his lab. Jacques Catelain as Einar Norsen in Marcel L’Herbier’s *L’Inhumaine* (1924). The lab was designed by Fernand Léger, the Constructivist inspired overalls by Yose. Courtesy of Collezione Ettore Molinaro.

Germaine Dulac was the only woman director among the Impressionists. Among her best-known films are *La Souriante Madame Beudet* (1922), *L’Invitation au Voyage* (1927) and *La Coquille et le Clergyman* (*The Seashell and The Clergyman*, 1927), the latter based on a scenario by Antonin Artaud. It also has the distinction of being the very first Surrealist film to reach the screen, to the dismay of André Breton. Dulac wasn’t a member of the Surrealist group, and probably worse in Breton’s eyes, she was a woman and a lesbian. At the première on 9 February 1928, the Surrealists, led by Breton and Louis Aragon, conducted a raucous protest.

La Coquille et le Clergyman was an avant-garde film. Most French avant-garde filmmakers were associated with the Paris scene. Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp both owned cine cameras. Man Ray’s first film, *Le Retour à la Raison* (*The Return to Reason*),



Kiki de Montparnasse in *Ballet Mécanique*, made by Fernand Léger and Dudley Murphy, with input by Man Ray. Kiki appeared in numerous films in the 1920s and '30s, in acting roles as well as making brief cameos, including Man Ray's *Le Retour à la Raison* and Marcel L'Herbier's *L'Inhumaine*. Gelatin silver print, circa 1924. Private collection.

was made for Tristan Tzara's Dadaist *Soirée du Coeur à barbe* on 6 July 1923, with moving rayographs, turning paper spirals and the shadow-striped torso of Kiki de Montparnasse. A film of pure cinema poetry. As was his next, *Emak Bakia* (1926), the title, a Basque expression for "leave me alone". Man Ray assisted Duchamp in the making of *Anémic Cinéma* (1926), rotating disks, attached to a bicycle wheel, ten disks with optical patterns, interspersed with nine black cardboard disks with white letters spelling out puns, similar to those that Rose Sélavy, Duchamp's female alter ego, had published in the magazine *Littérature* in 1922.

Fernand Léger collaborated with Dudley Murphy on a Dadaist, post-Cubist film, *Ballet Mécanique* (1923-1924). René Clair, who made his first film in 1924, *Paris qui dort*, had a small office at Théâtre de Champs-Élysées, home to Ballet Suédois, a company created by the Swedish art collector Rolf de Maré, which during the years 1920-1925, competed with Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Ballet Suédois' last ballet, *Relâche*, was a collaboration between Francis Picabia and Erik Satie. They commissioned Clair to make a film to be shown during the intermission. *Entr'acte* was very much in the Dadaist vein, mixing repeat movements,

multi-exposure, stop-motion and much else, and had a cast that included Picabia, Satie, de Maré, Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, dancer/choreographer Jean Börlin, and Clair himself.

Jean Painlevé carved out a unique position for himself. A pioneer in scientific film, he made underwater fauna films and not just for the scientific community. He also made dreamlike films of sea horses, skeleton shrimps etc. and so expanded the vocabulary of Surrealist and early avant-garde cinema.

The avant-garde thrived, as there were places to screen the films. "Ciné Clubs" had sprung up all over France, and in 1924, Jean Tédesco opened what is regarded as the very first art house cinema in the world, in Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier in Paris. It was quickly followed by others, including Studio des Ursulines and Studio 28. It was the art houses that screened Dali and Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) and *L'Age d'Or* (1930). The latter was financed by Charles and Marie de Noailles, wealthy patrons of the arts. They also financed Jean Cocteau's first film, *Le Sang d'un poète* (1930), with Lee Miller appearing as a living statue.

Jean Painléve with his microcinematography camera. Though not a member of the Surrealist group, he would often exhibit with them. He scandalised the scientific world by stating "science is fiction". Gelatin silver print, 1929. Collection of the author.



Germaine Dulac's *La Coquille et le Clergyman* was the first Surrealist film to reach the screen. Gelatin silver print, 1927. Private collection.

L'Age d'Or and *Le Sang d'un Poète* were among the early sound films made in France. Sound film had an uneasy start in France. And not just technically. While René Clair was able to make the transition, Gance and L'Herbier would never equal their silent films. Paramount Studios made an attempt to duplicate the success of its American films, by making French versions at the Joinville studios. But the plots rarely translated into a French context. The films were made quickly, quality suffered, and the audience looked elsewhere.

Jean Vigo directed the groundbreaking *Zéro de Conduite* (*Zero for Conduct*, 1933). The film, an explosion of energy, roughly shot with non-professional actors, was set in a boarding school, with four boys rebelling against their teachers and taking over the school. The film was deemed so subversive that it was banned in France until November 1945. Next, Vigo directed *L'Atalante*, about a newly-wed couple who live on a barge. They split up, then reunite, with Vigo blending naturalism with dreamlike sequences. Vigo was at that point severely ill with tuberculosis, at times directing from his sickbed. He died on 5 October 1934, less than a month after the film's premiere.

L'Atalante was part of a wave in the 1930s called "poetic realism", a tendency rather than a coherent movement. Other directors associated with poetic realism include Jean Renoir, Pierre Chenal, Julien

Duviver and Marcel Carné. The films were "recreated realism", shot in studios, stylised, focusing on people living on the margins of society, reflecting the social and political conditions of the time. They have a bitter, often fatalistic tone. This is true of Marcel Carné's 1938 films *Le Quai de Brumes* (*Port of Shadows*) and *Hôtel du Nord*. Carné often worked with Jacques Prévert, author, poet and active participant in the Surrealist movement. Prévert also wrote the screenplay for Carné's masterpiece, *Les Enfants du Paradis* (*Children of Paradise*). Set in the Parisian theatrical world of the 1830s, it revolves around a courtesan and four men: an actor, a mime, an aristocrat and a criminal, each loving her but in very different ways. It was made, with great difficulty, during the German occupation. Carné gave cover to many members of the resistance, employing them as extras, though they had to mingle with Vichy collaborators who had been imposed by the authorities. The film finally had its premiere in March 1945.

By that time, the Cinémathèque Française had been going since 1936. It was founded by Henri Langlois, and his friend, future film director Georges Franju, with assistance from German film critic Lotte Eisner, who had left her native country after the Nazi takeover. Langlois feared that the history of cinema would be forgotten. Films deemed no longer profitable after their initial showing were left to gather dust, or even worse, were destroyed. He took it upon himself to save the history, not only of French cinema, but also



"Lee Miller as a living statue in white robes". Jean Cocteau, to the left of the cameraman, during the filming of *Le Sang d'un Poète*. It was the first in his Orphic trilogy of films, followed by *Orphée* in 1950 and *Le Testament d'Orphée* in 1960. Gelatin silver print, 1930. Collection of Christophe Goeury.



“Poetic realism”. Jean Vigo’s *L’Atalante*, released 1934. Gelatin silver print. Private collection.

international. It had to be saved. All of it. As philosopher Jacques Derrida would later say of Langlois, “he was possessed by archive fever.” Germaine Dulac suggested to Langlois that it would good for the Cinémathèque to develop relations with foreign institutions focused on cinema heritage. Thus, in 1938, the Cinémathèque founded the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), with the British Film Institute, the Reichsfilmarchiv in Berlin and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

For Langlois, it all started with a “ciné club” in his parents’ house, where he and Franju would project silent films for invited guests. Sometime later, they rented a tiny screening room on the Champs-Élysées, showing inventive programmes that included D. W. Griffith’s *Birth of Nation*, and Giovanni Pastrone’s *Cabiria*, and Louis Feuillade’s a serial about the horrifying, at times inexplicable crimes of *Fantômas*, a favourite with the Surrealists. Langlois’ first archive space consisted of an enormous bathtub in the family home. Sometime later, a bigger space was acquired, a dilapidated building next to the retirement home in Orly where Georges Méliès was resident. Armed with 10 000 francs, given to him by the publisher of the trade weekly *La Cinématographie Française*, Langlois started buying films. Directors, anxious to preserve their films, gave Langlois prints, but mostly, Langlois hunted down the films himself. The



“Exploding with energy. And banned” Jean Vigo’s *Zéro de Conduite*. Gelatin silver print, 1933. Collection of Christophe Goeury.

collection quickly grew. But it was nearly destroyed during the occupation, when the German authorities ordered all films made prior to 1937 to be destroyed. It was saved, largely thanks to the help of a Nazi officer, Frank Hensel, who in civilian life was the director of the Reichsfilmarchiv in Berlin.



"He's in love". Jean-Louis Barrault as the mime Baptiste Debureau in Marcel Carné's film *Les Enfants du Paradis*. Gelatin silver print, 1945. Collection of Christophe Goeury.

After the war, in 1947, with a subsidy from the government, the Cinémathèque moved to Avenue de Messine. The headquarters also had a screening room. Though small, it would soon become what Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci called "the best school of cinema in the world." Langlois wanted to teach the public about film but he was no theoretician. His idea of teaching was to show, be it early avant-garde films or seasons of John Ford and Howard Hawks films. The screening room became a magnet for a group of young enthusiasts, later called "Les enfants de la Cinémathèque", including Jean-Luc Godard, François Truffaut, Éric Rohmer, Claude Chabrol, Roger Vadim and Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, who would go on to form their own ciné-clubs, become film critics, before becoming directors themselves.

And Les enfants de la Cinémathèque found contemporary French cinema staid, locked in conventions. The magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma*, founded in 1951,

became their print medium. It was where François Truffaut in January 1954 published a manifesto, a blistering attack on the "tradition of quality", unimaginative films based on safe literary works, calling for innovation and experimentation. It was the firing shot for what would be called La Nouvelle Vague, "The New Wave". In questioning the media of cinema and asking what it could be, the young directors were echoing Louis Delluc some 40 years earlier. And the directors of La Nouvelle Vague would prove stylistically just as disparate as the Impressionists. Truffaut debuted with *Les Quatre Cents Coups* (*The 400 Blows*, 1959), followed by *Tirez sur la Pianiste* (*Shoot the Piano Player*, 1960) and *Jules et Jim* (1962). Godard was responsible for a string of the movement's most famous films, among them, *À bout de Souffle* (*Breathless*, 1960), *Une femme est une femme* (*A Woman is a Woman*, 1961), *Le Mépris* (*Contempt*, 1963) and *Alphaville* (1965).

Alongside La Nouvelle Vague there was another group of directors, Groupe Rive Gauche (Left Bank Group), sometimes called the Left Bank New Wave, which included Alain Resnais, Chris Marker and Agnès Varda. Resnais made two masterpieces in succession, *Hiroshima mon Amour* (1959), a fusion of fiction and documentary, fragmented and shifting narratives, with a script by Marguerite Duras, followed by the highly stylised and enigmatic *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* (*Last year in Marienbad*, released 1961), in collaboration with Alain Robbe-Grillet. Marker made a number of films prior to *La Jetée* (1962), which brought him international acclaim. Told almost entirely in black and white stills, the story is focused on a post-nuclear war time travel experiment, developed as photomontage, with William Klein, who also provided the English narration, appearing as "a man from the future". Varda, who started her career as a photographer, debuted with *La Pointe Courte* (1954). Experimental, hauntingly beautiful, it tells the story of an unhappy couple working through their relationship in a fishing village. Strikingly free in its style, it is regarded as the first film of La Nouvelle Vague. The two groups had a profound influence not only on international cinema, and in laying the foundations of the auteur theory, with films manifesting the director's personal style and focus, but also a general loosening up of conventions, in photography, graphic design, television, and elsewhere. During a public debate at the 1966 Cannes Film Festival, director Henri-Georges Clouzot said to Jean-Luc

Godard, "But surely you agree, Monsieur Godard, that films should have a beginning, a middle part and an end?" To which Godard replied, "Yes, but not necessarily in that order."

Meanwhile, storm clouds were gathering over the Cinémathèque. In 1963, with funds provided by André Malraux, minister of culture in De Gaulle's government, it moved to bigger premises in the Palais de Chaillot. But with state funding came a sense of entitlement, for officials to scrutinise the inner workings of the Cinémathèque. And the officials were mystified. There was no proper inventory and the administration seemed to be in Langlois' head. Famously secretive, only he knew where the various parts of the collection were stored. This was unacceptable to the officials. It didn't help that they found him downright uncooperative. Soon Langlois experienced some not-so subtle harassments. And then it all came to a head.

1968 saw a wave of protests across the globe. In France, they would become known as *Mai 68*, civil unrest that began in May and led to violent demonstrations, the occupation of universities and general strikes, not only grinding the French economy to a halt but bringing the country to a point where the government feared revolution or civil war. On 29 May, President Charles de Gaulle fled to West Germany. But there was a preamble to *Mai 68*, the Langlois affair. It erupted on 9 February 1968, at a meeting of the administrative council of the Cinémathèque, where Langlois was fired from his position, to be replaced by Pierre Barbin, the choice of André Malraux.

Reactions were swift. French newspapers reported the firing of Langlois in highly critical terms. Forty filmmakers, including Abel Gance, Jean Renoir and Jean-Luc Godard, stated that they would not allow their films to be shown at the "Barbinothèque". Telegrams and letters of support from directors and actors flooded in from around the globe. And on 14 February, thousands of people answered François Truffaut's call in the newspaper *Combat*, to gather for a mass meeting in the gardens of the Trocadéro next to Palais de Chaillot.

Out in force were also the police. And then the police charged. Bertrand Tavernier was hit, his face covered in blood. Truffaut and Godard received minor injuries. Others were battered to the ground.



George Pierre has brought an unusually personal dimension to this 'on set' image. He has included himself as a reflection in the elaborately framed mirror. Delphine Seyrig blows a kiss simultaneously at us and at him, a perfect metaphor for the ambiguities at the heart of *L'Année dernière à Marienbad*. Gelatin silver print. Georges Pierre / Pierre de Geyer collection.



Jean-Luc Godard's *À Bout de Souffle*. Jean-Paul Belmondo and Jean Seberg stroll casually down the Champs-Élysées. Raymond Cauchetier's spontaneous shot captured the spirit of the Nouvelle Vague and became one of its most enduring icons. Gelatin silver print, 1959. © The Estate of Raymond CAUCHETIER. Courtesy Peter Fetterman Gallery.

After two hours of mayhem, Godard ordered the protesters to disperse. But they were by no means beaten and before leaving, filmmaker Jean Rouch declared that the protest went beyond the Cinémathèque, that the protest marked the beginning of a cultural revolution, the first consciousness-raising among youth, a rejection of the government's increasing attempts to regulate and control all elements of French life. The affair dragged on. What finally saved Langlois was when the Motion Picture Association of America threatened to withdraw all American films from the Cinémathèque unless he was reinstated. The government backed down. On 22 April, Langlois was back in his office, but most of the state funding was

withdrawn. He would have to find funds elsewhere. Still, his supporters had taken on the government and won. *Mai 68* would end very differently.

For his supporters, the Cinémathèque without Langlois had been unthinkable. But it would go on after his death in 1977. In 2005, it moved to a new building, designed by Frank Gehry, in rue de Bercy. It also houses the Musée de la Cinémathèque, created by Langlois in 1972, the realisation of a lifelong dream.

There hasn't been a major collective push in French cinema since La Nouvelle Vague and the Left Bank Group, though there has been a stream of fine films,



“A film told mostly in black and white stills”. Chris Marker’s *La Jetée* (1962). Gelatin silver print. Private collection.

including Jean-Jacques Beineix’s *Diva* (1981), Luc Besson’s *Subway* (1985) Mathieu Kassovitz’s *La Haine* (1995), and this year’s Palm d’Or winner, *Anatomie d’une chute*, (*Anatomy of a Fall*) directed by Justine Triet. If anything, many of the directors of the generations of filmmakers that followed felt that the heritage was a burden. In an interview with *The Guardian* in 1985, Luc Besson even went so far as to say “I hate the atmosphere of the Cinémathèque”, adding, “When *Cahiers du Cinéma* gives me bad reviews, I feel I’m in good company.”

Still, in the photography market, it’s that burdensome heritage that is sought after by collectors of photography of French cinema. And I’ll leave the final word to Christophe Goeury who points out. – Some of the now very sought after images were made as presentation prints or for private use but the majority were made for press use. That’s all changed. In the digital era, paper prints have been replaced by digital files. The paper prints are now the fragments of a vanished world, and they’re very wonderful fragments, I think.



“And then the police charged”. Paris, 14 February, 1968. The Langlois affair.
Photo by GERARD-AIME/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images.

24. November 2023 | Vienna

LEITZ AUCTION
PHOTOGRAPHS



© Otto Steinert, *Maske einer Tänzerin*, 1952

A TRIBUTE TO OTTO STEINERT
AND THE ART OF PHOTOGRAPHY

A convolute of 22 of his masterworks will be auctioned among many other exciting positions.

www.leitz-auction.com