



**PRESS
RELEASE**

BFI announces ART OF ACTION, a major UK-wide season celebrating the artistry of real action choreography



The season will be presented by the BFI Film Audience Network at venues UK-wide from October-December 2024, with highlights including:

- BFI Distribution re-release of Kathryn Bigelow's **POINT BREAK** (1991), in cinemas UK-wide on 8 November
- UK-wide screenings and events presented in partnership with the BFI Film Audience Network, including the ninth edition of the Fighting Spirit Film Festival, a celebration of women of colour working in action cinema and screenings dedicated to the 'original Hollywood action hero' Buster Keaton
- Major season at BFI Southbank and BFI IMAX featuring focuses on John Woo and Bollywood action
- BFI 4K UHD release of **SEVEN SAMURAI** on 21 October, with screenings at selected cinemas from 27 September, including a premiere event at BFI IMAX on 26 September
- A collection of films to stream on demand on BFI Player

<https://www.bfi.org.uk/art-action>

Monday 29 July 2024, London

The BFI today announces a new season celebrating the artistry of real action choreography, that has kept film audiences on the edge of their seats since the early days of cinema. Presented by the **BFI Film Audience Network** (BFI FAN) using funds from the National Lottery, **ART OF ACTION** will take place at cinemas across the UK from October-December 2024, with the chance to get behind-the-scenes insights from those working in the action and stunt communities, via special events, demonstrations, talks and screenings throughout the season. **ART OF ACTION** will spotlight the genre through the ages, with films

ranging from cult classics to lesser-known gems from around the world. It will illuminate the work of female stunt performers and their struggle for recognition, and champion the new wave of action stars and filmmakers who are building upon the legacy of those who have fallen, crashed, smashed and picked themselves up before them.

From the jaw-dropping stunts of the silent era to the intricate dynamic choreography of today's biggest action films, via the daredevil ethos of Hong Kong filmmaking, ART OF ACTION will feature screenings of **THE GENERAL** (1926), **THE TRAIN** (1964), **THE WILD BUNCH** (1969), the **POLICE STORY TRILOGY** (1985-1992), **RUN LOLA RUN** (1998), **CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON** (2000), **POLITE SOCIETY** (2023) and many more. The centrepiece of ART OF ACTION will be a BFI re-release of Kathryn Bigelow's **POINT BREAK** (1991) starring Keanu Reeves as FBI agent Johnny Utah, who goes undercover with a gang of surfers, led by Patrick Swayze's Bodhi, who are suspects in a series of bank robberies. Bigelow's kinetic masterpiece, which has rarely been seen on big screens in the UK in recent years, will be released in selected cinemas UK-wide by BFI Distribution on 8 November, with the film also available on BFI Player on the same date.

Timon Singh, BFI FAN Producer and programmer of ART OF ACTION, said: *"After the triumph of EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE ALL AT ONCE and the continued success of franchises like JOHN WICK and MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE, it's clear that the thrill of watching 'real action' done by stunt performers, as well as stars like Michelle Yeoh and Tom Cruise, still captivates audiences. This season looks at the cinematic artistry, skills and craft involved in creating iconic action sequences and films, as well as engage with the historic roots and cross-cultural influences of the genre. We'll celebrate the skill and daring of actors and stunt performers and their extraordinary on-screen exploits and provide opportunities to get behind-the-scenes insights into the daring world of action design which will thrill and entertain, and hopefully inspire the next generation of creatives".*

Jason Wood, BFI Director of Public Programme & Audiences, said: *"Art of Action will be a high-octane crowd pleaser at a moment when we truly need to be supporting cinemas, which provide such vital culture and entertainment to communities across the UK. The BFI Film Audience Network plays a really important role in getting diverse films to audiences and this has been an inspirational and creative collaboration with our colleagues at Watershed, Bristol taking the lead. It's a great blueprint for how the BFI can work with partners UK-wide on major projects. Art of Action's broad historical and international scope presents the films we love alongside brand-new discoveries from silent gems to combat charged women, martial arts to major blockbusters plus a long-awaited re-release of Kathryn Bigelow's seminal Point Break. Buckle up and enjoy the ride!"*

The season will be programmed around three key themes, with the first dedicated to spotlighting action through the ages – from the early visual gags of silent gems like **THE GENERAL** (1926) to influential classics such as **THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD** (1938) and **THE TRAIN** (1964), through to the intricate and dynamic wuxia choreography of **CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON** (2000). ART OF ACTION will also bust the myth that action is just by and for men; celebrating the plethora of female talent in front of and

behind the camera, as well as shedding a light on under-represented voices in the action community, from **YES MADAM** (1985) to **POLITE SOCIETY** (2023) via **RUN LOLA RUN** (1998). Finally, the season will explore how action films became a global phenomenon as both Eastern and Western filmmakers were inspired by each other, and the impact of such cross-cultural influences on cinema today – from **SEVEN SAMURAI** (1954) and **THE WILD BUNCH** (1969) to the **POLICE STORY TRILOGY** (1985-1992).

More than 50 venues UK-wide will host events and screenings supported by the BFI Film Audience Network, with some of the highlights set to include:

- **Broadway Cinema's** action mini season designed for Under-25s and marginalised audiences, which will include a day of Robin Hood screenings to mark Nottingham's Robin Hood Marathon.
- **Call to Action**, a programme curated by **Reclaim the Frame** that centres women of colour working in front of and behind the camera in the action genre, from the 90s to the present day. Comprising special events with guests including stunt performer **Aysha Hussian**, panel conversations, demos and screenings, Call to Action will tour venues including Hackney Picturehouse, Dukes at Komedia Picturehouse (Brighton), Glasgow Film Theatre and Midlands Art Centre (Birmingham).
- **Cromarty Kicks Ass**, a tightly packed season of films run by Cromarty Community Cinema in the Highlands, Scotland, will address themes of justice, revenge, honour and the global desire to have the cinema shake with action, alongside parkour and capoeira demonstrations and workshops, and a free outdoor screening of a Jackie Chan classic accompanied by a live musician and torchlight lion dance.
- **Exeter Phoenix: Smash The Glass**, which will celebrate the women who have advanced action cinema both on and off-screen, delivered in partnership with Girls on Film critic and broadcaster **Anna Smith**, with collaborations from **Plymouth Art Cinema**.
- **Fabrica** in Brighton will deliver **Creative Action**, a weekend-long festival empowering young people aged 16-25, women and people of marginalized genders by repositioning the cultural significance of action films for audiences. The festival will engage these groups through partnerships with women, non-binary and queer-friendly martial arts clubs, a programme of shorts from local and international animators and a collaboration with their young film programmers' group, Fresh Perspectives.
- The ninth edition of **Fighting Spirit Film Festival**, with martial arts shorts and features presented alongside martial arts and weapons demonstrations, a martial arts workshop and seminars on choreographing a short action sequence.
- **Hyde Park Picture House** Leeds's programme exploring the history of car races and chases in global cinema, featuring talks and Q&As with academics, car enthusiasts and stuntwomen, plus a day-long educational session as part of Hyde Park Picture House's **Film School** strand.
- **The Magic Lantern** screening **POINT BREAK** alongside the local surf community in Tywyn with entertainment including a live band and a party; **THE GENERAL** with live musical accompaniment and trips on the Talylyn steam railway; martial arts demos, a free sword fighting workshop and Welsh filmmaker Garth Evans' **RAID II**.
- **MilkTea's ESEA In Action**, at Brixton Ritzy in London and City Screen in York, which will showcase

a program of East and Southeast Asian (ESEA) cinema with their programme theme, Black x Asian cultural crossover, in partnership with **Dark Matter**.

- **Mitchell Arts Centre**'s celebration of the 'original Hollywood action hero', **Buster Keaton**, with enhanced screenings featuring live musical accompaniment from musician **Meg Morley** and an introduction from local film historian **Ray Johnson**.
- **Queen's Film Theatre** Belfast's programme spanning the breadth of the genre with special events including a celebration of women in action with film journalist **Helen O'Hara**, a stage combat demonstration by fight director **Philip Rafferty**, and an action all-nighter curated by QFT's LUMI programmers.

The full UK-wide line-up of screenings, events and touring programmes will be announced soon.

BFI Southbank will play host to a major season from **21 October – 30 November**, concentrating on several themes alongside stunts; the women of action, the master John Woo and the influence of Bollywood, as well as serving a plotted guide through the history of action cinema with a special all action-themed edition of Big Screen Classics, where BFI Southbank shows classic films on a daily basis for just £9. Special events confirmed for the season so far include **Stunt Saturday** on **16 November**, a special day of talks, panel events, screenings and workshops all celebrating the art of stunts. BFI Southbank will welcome **Nida Manzoor** for a Q&A on **17 November**, following a screening of her hilarious and exhilarating action-comedy **POLITE SOCIETY** (2023), which follows 16-year-old Ria, an aspiring stuntwoman, who is alarmed when her sister Lena is swept up by a charming suitor and starts heading towards marriage at speed. Also on **17 November**, **The Art of the Action Trailer** will present some of the best and worst action trailers through time, pondering the iconic trailer voiceover and decide whether it's better to reveal or conceal the big stunts.

BFI IMAX, the UK's largest screen, is one of the best places to watch an action blockbuster with its immersive, unmatched scale. The cinema will host a number of events during the season, including all-nighters dedicated to **JOHN WICK** and **MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE**, and the premiere of a new 4K restoration of Akira Kurosawa's **SEVEN SAMURAI** (1954) on **26 September**. **SEVEN SAMURAI** will also be released by the BFI on 4K UHD on **21 October**, with the new restoration playing in further selected cinemas as part of the season. More information about the 4K UHD release will be revealed soon.

Audiences will also be able to stream films from the season at home on **BFI Player**, with a selection of titles set to include **FIST OF FURY** (1972), **THE STREET FIGHTER** (1974), **ARMOUR OF GOD** (1986), **HEROES SHED NO TEARS** (1986), **POINT BREAK** (1991), **RUN LOLA RUN** (1998), **LEONOR WILL NEVER DIE** (2022) and many more to be announced soon.

– ENDS –

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All talent appearances are work permitting and subject to change.

About the BFI Film Audience Network

Supported by National Lottery funding, the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), is central to the BFI's aim to ensure the greatest choice of film is available for everyone. Established in 2012 to build wider and more diverse UK cinema audiences for UK and international film, FAN is a unique, UK-wide collaboration made up of eight Hubs managed by leading film organisations and venues strategically placed around the country. FAN also supports talent development with BFI NETWORK Talent Executives in each of the Hubs in England, with a mission to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers.

BFI FAN Film Hubs are:

- Film Hub London is led by Film London
- Film Hub Midlands is led by Broadway, Nottingham working in partnership with the Birmingham-based Flatpack
- Film Hub North is led jointly by Showroom Sheffield and HOME Manchester
- Film Hub Northern Ireland is led by Queen's University Belfast
- Film Hub Scotland is led by Glasgow Film Theatre
- Film Hub South East is led by the Independent Cinema Office
- Film Hub South West is led by Watershed in Bristol
- Film Hub Wales is led by Chapter in Cardiff



ABOUT THE BFI

We are a cultural charity, a National Lottery distributor, and the UK's lead organisation for film and the moving image.

Our mission is:

- To support creativity and actively seek out the next generation of UK storytellers.
- To grow and care for the BFI National Archive, the world's largest film and television archive.
- To offer the widest range of UK and international moving image culture through our programmes and festivals - delivered online and in venue.
- To use our knowledge to educate and deepen public appreciation and understanding of film and the moving image.
- To work with Government and industry to ensure the continued growth of the UK's screen industries.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Jay Hunt.

***** PICTURE DESK *****

A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting the BFI and Art of Action are available below:

Venue images: [BFI Southbank](#), [BFI IMAX](#)

Film stills: [Art of Action programme images](#)