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Viva Varda! Agnès Varda exhibition at Eye Filmmuseum



Still *Varda par Agnès* (FR, 2018) © Ciné-Tamaris

The acclaimed French filmmaker and photographer Agnès Varda is the focus of *Viva Varda!*, an exhibition opening at Eye Filmmuseum on 20 February 2027. Her widely admired work combines playfulness and social engagement with an affectionate view of the world and an inventive approach to form. Varda is one of the few women of her generation to forge a long and distinguished career in filmmaking, starting in the 1950s.
Viva Varda!*, 20 February – 22 August 2027, Eye Filmmuseum, IJpromenade 1, Amsterdam,* eyefilm.nl/vivavarda

The work of Agnès Varda is driven by a sense of joy, curiosity and a deep engagement with her subjects. Besides her fictional work, her documentaries invite us to take a closer look at the world around us. Exhibition visitors can hear Varda's unmistakable voice and perceptive observations through excerpts from her films and interviews, alongside some 450 photographs and objects from her private collection. Sequences from her films will be shown on large screens, and a few of her art installations will also be on display.

No convention ever managed to curb her artistic freedom and open-minded outlook. Her best-known feature films include *Cléo from 5 to 7* (1962), one of the most idiosyncratic representatives of the Nouvelle Vague, *Vagabond*

(1985), and the spellbinding documentaries *The Gleaners and I* (2000) and *Faces Places* (2017). As a widely travelled and socially engaged artist, Varda was also keenly attuned to social upheaval. Her films from the 1960s and 1970s reflect the artistic and political unrest of that period: the Cuban revolution (*Hello Cubans*, 1964), the American civil rights movement (*Black Panthers*, 1968) and the hippie generation (*Lions Love (… and Lies)*, 1969).

Wandering

Varda's feminist principles are evident in her groundbreaking storytelling, sometimes deliberately provocative, as in *Happiness* (1965), an extraordinarily daring portrayal of a love triangle. Wandering is another recurring theme in her free-spirited work, made more radical by the fact that you see female wanderers. Up until that point, the flâneur had always been a man. She portrays women who reflect on their own lives, something seldom seen in the early years of her career, in the 1960s. Her cinematic manifesto *Women Reply* (1975) offers a different portrayal of women and romantic relationships, one that challenges the common clichés and makes her work as relevant today as ever.

From the 1980s onwards, Varda explored street art and the lives of people on the margins of society in Los Angeles (*Mural Murals*, 1982), and she later turned her attention to urban and rural life in France, as in *The Gleaners and I* (2000). In this remarkable documentary, she also examines the problem of overconsumption in a light-hearted yet philosophical manner. Throughout, she employs her distinctive cinematic style: an infectious blend of playfulness, leisurely wandering and meticulous direction.

Film, Talks & Events

A large selection of Agnès Varda's films will be screened at Eye throughout the exhibition. The Eye on Art programme will also illuminate her work at the intersection of other artistic disciplines.

Biography

Agnès Varda (1928, Belgium – 2019, France) was a French film director and photographer. Her debut film, *La pointe courte* (1954), was a precursor to the French New Wave. Following her groundbreaking second feature, *Cléo from 5 to 7* (1962), she went on to make short films, feature films and documentaries, among them *Happiness* (1964, Silver Bear in Berlin), *Vagabond* (1985, Golden Lion in Venice), *The Gleaners and I* (2000, European Film Award) and *The Beaches of Agnès* (2008, César). At 89, Varda became the oldest person ever nominated for an Oscar with *Faces Places* (2017). Her most celebrated film of the 1990s was *Jacquot of Nantes* (1991), based on the childhood of director Jacques Demy, whom Varda had married in 1962.

Varda also created photography and art installations. Her exhibition *Patatutopia* was presented at the Venice Biennale in 2003. She subsequently had various solo exhibitions at, among others, the Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain and the Centre Pompidou in Paris. She was awarded an Honorary Palme d'Or at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival and an Honorary Oscar in 2017 in recognition of her lifetime achievements.

The original exhibition was compiled and produced by La Cinémathèque française in Paris, in collaboration with Ciné-Tamaris.

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Note for the press, not for publication
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