

## Document Citation

Title	<b>Bunuel in France</b>
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Los Angeles County Museum of Art</i>
Date	2003 Jun 27
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	4
Subjects	Buñuel, Luis (1900-1983), Calanda, Spain
Film Subjects	Belle de jour, Buñuel, Luis, 1967 Le charme discret de la bourgeoisie (The discreet charm of the bourgeoisie), Buñuel, Luis, 1972 La voie lactée (The milky way), Buñuel, Luis, 1969 Le journal d'une femme de chambre (The diary of a chambermaid), Buñuel, Luis, 1964 Cet obscur objet du désir (That obscure object of desire), Buñuel, Luis, 1977 Le fantôme de la liberté (The phantom of liberty), Buñuel, Luis, 1974

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## BUNUEL IN FRANCE



**"Bourgeois  
'morality' is to me  
the very essence of  
the immorality we  
should fight  
against."—Luis  
Bunuel**

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*The Milky Way*  
In new 35-mm print  
Saturday, July 5

**BUNUEL IN FRANCE**

June 27 through July 5, 2003

Given the hostility they faced from conservative elements of society, the Surrealists must be credited with considerable success in disrupting the cultural and political order of the early 20th century. Preeminent among them is the great Spanish filmmaker Luis Bunuel, a provocateur who shocked his viewers awake from the sleepwalking trance of mundane routine and assumptions. At certain screenings of his films, Bunuel is said to have filled his pockets with rocks, in case of trouble. And when his 1930 film *L'Age d'or* opened in Paris at Studio 28, right-wing groups such as the "Patriotic Youth" attacked, smashing chairs and slashing Surrealist paintings.

Luis Bunuel, born in 1900 in the sleepy town of Calanda in northeastern Spain, received a Jesuit education, serving at Mass and singing in the choir. At

**Film Tickets and Info**

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university in Madrid, his interests ranged from entomology to philosophy and hypnotism, and his friends included Garcia Lorca and Salvador Dali. After leaving Franco's Spain for Paris, Bunuel collaborated with Dali to make his first film, *Un Chien andalou* (1929), whose unsettling, hallucinatory imagery made a great stir among the avant-garde.

From the 1930s to the early 1960s, Bunuel moved between Spain, France, the United States, and Mexico, making twenty-three films, mostly low-budget and critically acclaimed, such as *Land without Bread* (1933), *Los Olivados* (1950), and *The Exterminating Angel* (1962). Toward the end of his career, between 1964 and 1977, Bunuel made six films in France that are among his most impressive. Graced with witty scripts by French screenwriter Jean-Claude Carriere and boasting the *creme de la creme* of European acting talent, Bunuel's scathing and enigmatic commentaries on social and moral hypocrisy abound in the Surrealist situations and images that are his enduring trademark. The series culminates with two of Bunuel's rarest films, long out of distribution—*The Phantom of Liberty* and *The Milky Way*—both presented in new 35-mm prints.

All screenings are in the Leo S. Bing Theater, LACMA East

Friday and Saturday screenings begin at 7:30 pm unless otherwise noted. There is a 10-minute intermission between features on a double bill. All programs are subject to change. All films are in 35mm unless otherwise indicated. All foreign language films are subtitled in English. Some films are unrated and may not be appropriate for younger viewers.

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The Leo S. Bing Theater is equipped with a DTS digital sound system courtesy of Universal Pictures, an SDDS digital sound system courtesy of Sony Cinema Products, and Dolby digital sound. In-kind support for the museum's film program is provided by K-MOZART, 105.1 FM, the museum's official classical radio station.

#### **Film Department Staff**

Ian Birnie, Director  
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Friday, June 27, 7:30 pm

#### **Belle de jour**

(1967/color/101 min.) Scr: Luis Bunuel, Jean-Claude Carriere; dir: Luis Bunuel; w/ Catherine Deneuve, Jean Sorel, Michel Piccoli.

Catherine Deneuve is Severine, the enchantingly narcissistic young wife of a businessman who relieves her boredom by working occasional hours in a luxurious brothel. The eroticism is discreet rather than explicit, such as when a client opens an ornate box to show Severine an object he wishes to use in lovemaking. She



refuses, but the audience never sees what the object is. "Luis Bunuel, one of a small handful of true masters of the cinema, had an insight into human nature that was cynical and detached . . . He understands why Severine is drawn to the brothel, but he doesn't stop there . . . He pushes on to a bizarre conclusion in which she finally gets what she really wants."—Roger Ebert

### **Diary of a Chambermaid**

(1964/b&w/101 min.) Scr: Luis Bunuel, Jean-Claude Carriere; dir: Luis Bunuel; w/ Jeanne Moreau, Georges Geret.

Adapted from the novel by Octave Mirbeau, *Diary of a Chambermaid* was the first collaboration between Carriere and Bunuel. A socially ambitious chambermaid, played with great dignity by Jeanne Moreau, must suffer the foot-fetish kink of an elderly bourgeois patriarch, the frostiness of his cleanliness-obsessed daughter, the constant advances of the daughter's playboy husband, and the jolly eccentric next door who tosses his trash in their yard. When a local girl from a poor family is raped and murdered by a right-wing moralist living in her own household, Moreau takes matters into her own hands.

Saturday, June 28; 7:30 pm

### **The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie**

(1972/color/102 min.) Scr: Luis Bunuel, Jean-Claude Carriere; dir: Luis Bunuel; w/ Fernando Rey, Delphine Seyrig, Bulle Ogier.

Winner of the Oscar for best foreign-language film and nominated for the screenplay, this hypnotic film follows a bourgeois group of acquaintances simply trying to arrange a meal together. The mundane world they inhabit is familiar yet utterly dreamlike, much of the action in fact occurring in the dreams of its characters, such as the dinner they sit down to on a stage in front of a hostile audience. "A cosmic vaudeville show—an Old Master's mischief. He is no longer savage about the hypocrisy and inanity of the privileged classes; he has grown almost fond of their follies."—Pauline Kael

### **That Obscure Object of Desire**

(1977/color/102 min.) Scr: Luis Bunuel, Jean-Claude Carriere; dir: Luis Bunuel; w/ Fernando Rey, Carole Bouquet, Angela Molina.

Bunuel's last film is the product of his long-held desire to adapt Pierre Louys's *La Femme et le pantin* (filmed by Josef von Sternberg in the 1930s as *The Devil Is a Woman*). Fernando Rey plays a gentleman in perpetual pursuit of his maid, Conchita, played alternately by Carole Bouquet and Angela Molina, a strange doubling of identity that underlines the impossibility of a man ever possessing a woman's body, in spite of his desire.

"Passionate and urbane, witty and erotic, adventurous and committed to the mystery of the human soul."—Molly Haskell

Friday, July 4

Two screenings: 7:30 and 9:30 pm

New 35-mm print

### **The Phantom of Liberty**

(1974/color/104 min.) Scr: Jean-Claude Carriere; dir: Luis Bunuel; w/ Jean-Claude Brialy, Monica Vitti, Michel Piccoli.

In his autobiography, Bunuel singles out *The Phantom of Liberty* as one of his favorite works, perhaps because of its purely surreal narrative structure, flowing from one dream to the next—from a dinner party with toilets for chairs, to a condemned sniper released from death row to sign autographs, to soldiers in tanks hunting foxes. According to Bunuel, the phrase "phantom of liberty" came to him initially to describe the predicament of the Spaniards facing Napoleonic "liberation" in the opening scene of the film, but gradually he felt the idea referred equally to the illusory freedom of the artist. "The Phantom of Liberty is composed of startling images and enigmatic scenes. Everything in the film is upside down, inside out . . . it is also very funny."—Dilys Powell, *The Sunday Times*

Saturday, July 5

Three screenings: 5, 7:30, and 9:30 pm

New 35-mm print

### **The Milky Way**

(1969/color/105 min.) Scr: Jean-Claude Carriere; dir: Luis Bunuel; w/ Laurent Terzieff, Michel Piccoli, Pierre Clementi.

Two argumentative beggars undertake a hitchhiking pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain and along the way travel through time and Christian theology, encountering Jesus, the Virgin Mary, a Jesuit, a Jansenist, a prostitute, nuns crucifying one another, and an orgy. Bunuel and Carriere wrote the script in the Andalusian Mountains, after much spiritual debate and research, relying particularly on Abbe Pluquet's *Dictionary of Heresies*. "What's always intrigued me about heretics is not only their strange inventiveness, but their certainty that they possess the absolute truth."—Luis Bunuel

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