



Image: Wanda

wanda and beyond

The World of Barbara Loden

‘I don’t want to get into the system as it exists, I want to create my own corner.’ **Barbara Loden**

Visionary American independent actor-writer-director Barbara Loden is seen anew, not only through her extraordinary feature, the proto-feminist road film *Wanda*, but her wider career, writes season curator **Elena Gorfinkel**.

Barbara Loden is best known as the director, writer and star of the 1970 US independent road movie *Wanda*. A stunning work made on the cusp of feminism’s second wave, and Loden’s only feature as a filmmaker, it considers a wanderer who abandons her life as a miner’s wife and mother, electing to drift through America, taking up with several terrible men. Long difficult to see, *Wanda* has recently gained cult status, emblematic of all the films by women that remain unknown and unseen. This programme takes a deep dive into Loden’s larger film career, creative process and influences.

It explores her work as an actor and director in Hollywood, as well as on its margins, alongside *Wanda*’s cultural, industrial and social contexts. Loden’s life and work open a portal onto 1970s American cinema, replete with ‘mad housewives’ and wayward drifters, and to a moment of feminist urgencies, revealing the stakes of women’s creative labours. The constellation of *Wanda*’s genealogies and Loden’s legacies continue to inspire generations of filmmakers, writers and artists.

Want more?

Read more in Elena Gorfinkel’s new BFI Film Classic on *Wanda*, available at the BFI Shop and online

Barbara Loden Symposium

Join us for a day of talks, presentations and conversations about the legacies of *Wanda*, and the career and ongoing impact of Barbara Loden as a director, actor and writer. The symposium will include a special screening of Loden’s educational short films and a talk by restorationist, independent filmmaker and essayist Ross Lipman (Corpusfluxus).

Please visit bfi.org.uk/whatson for the full event schedule



Wanda

SAT 7 JUN
12:00 NFTS

Barbara Loden, Actor-Director

The path from Hollywood performance to directorial independence



INTRO

Wanda + extended season intro by Elena Gorfinkel* + intro by Jo Molyneux, BFI Archive Access Researcher**

USA 1970. Director Barbara Loden. With Barbara Loden, Michael Higgins, Dorothy Shupenes, Jerome Thier. 103min. Digital + 35mm†. 15

Loden based her film on a 1960 news story about a female accomplice to a bank robbery who expressed gratitude to her judge for her jail sentence. What kind of woman could be 'that passive and numb,' Loden asked? A poetic, unsentimental film of unvarnished beauty, *Wanda* traces the itinerancy of its unforgettable anti-hero,

played by Loden herself, who abandons her life as coalminer's wife and wanders across the desolate landscapes and byways of an unseen America.

Contains sexual violence, domestic abuse

†A BFI National Archive print. New 35mm print made with funding from the National Lottery

TUE 3 JUN
18:10 NFT1**

SAT 7 JUN
18:00 NFT3**†

WED 11 JUN
20:40 NFT3

SUN 22 JUN
12:50 NFT2

WED 25 JUN
20:45 NFT3



INTRO

The Frontier Experience



The Case of the Elevator Duck

Sentimental Educations: Barbara Loden's Classroom Films + intro by season curator Elena Gorfinkel

The Frontier Experience

USA 1975. Director Barbara Loden. 25min. 16mm

The Boy Who Liked Deer

USA 1975. Director Barbara Loden. 18min. 16mm

The Fur Coat Club

USA 1973. Director Joan Micklin Silver. 18min. Digital

The Case of the Elevator Duck

USA 1974. Director Joan Micklin Silver. 17min. Digital

Wanda was not Loden's only film: she made two 16mm educational shorts. *The Frontier Experience* draws on the 1860s diaries of frontierswoman Dellah Fowler on the Kansas plains (scripted by Joan Micklin Silver). *The Boy Who Liked Deer*, a film concerning boyhood emotions and anti-sociality, was scripted by novelist Dinitia McCarthy. They screen alongside Silver's educational shorts.

TRT 78min

Contains scenes of animals dying

The Frontier Experience and *The Boy Who Liked Deer* will be also screened as part of the symposium (p43)

MON 9 JUN
20:40 NFT3





Wild River

USA 1960. **Director** Elia Kazan. **With** Montgomery Clift, Lee Remick, Pat Hingle, Barbara Loden. 110min. Digital. PG

Montgomery Clift stars as a New Deal-era bureaucrat tasked with evicting tenants from their land for a hydroelectric dam project in the Tennessee River Valley. An octogenarian matriarch refuses to relinquish her island property in the name of 'progress', as romance

develops between the government agent and her granddaughter. Shot on location, Kazan's Chekhovian Cinemascope staging of tradition versus modernity also features Barbara Loden in her first small film role.

Contains racist views

MON 2 JUN
18:15 NFT3

SAT 7 JUN
20:40 NFT3

THU 26 JUN
20:30 NFT3



Splendor in the Grass

USA 1961. **Director** Elia Kazan. **With** Warren Beatty, Natalie Wood, Pat Hingle, Barbara Loden. 124min. 35mm. A BFI National Archive print. 15

A tale of unfulfilled teenage desire set in Kansas circa 1928, Elia Kazan's hothouse parable (with an Academy Award winning screenplay by playwright William Inge) examines the toll of Puritanical social propriety and sexual repression on high-school sweethearts: Bud Stamper, the child of oil wealth (Beatty's Hollywood debut) and the fragile Deanie. Loden's tempestuous role as Bud's wild flapper sister Ginny provides a prominent foil for the film's critique of judgmental small-town mores.

Contains sexual violence, mental health issues, suicide

THU 5 JUN
20:30 NFT2

SUN 8 JUN
15:00 NFT1



Fade In + intro by season curator Elena Gorfinkel*

USA 1968/1973. **Director** Alan Smithee, Jud Taylor (uncredited). **With** Barbara Loden, Burt Reynolds, Patricia Casey. 93min. Digital

Made on the rocky Moab set of the Terence Stamp western *Blue*, *Fade In* concerns a budding and unlikely city-country romance between a film editor (Loden's first leading role) and a Utah rancher. After editorial meddling by Paramount, this film became the first pseudonymous 'Alan Smithee' vehicle, shelved until a TV debut in 1973. Due to its unusual production history, this is a rare opportunity to see this film on the big screen.

MON 9 JUN
18:15 NFT3*

MON 23 JUN
20:45 NFT2

Wanda's Moment: Mad Housewives, Wayward Women

Figuring women's revolt across Hollywood, independent, nonfiction & avant-garde films of the late 1960s/early 1970s



The Rain People

USA 1969. Director Francis Ford Coppola. With Shirley Knight, James Caan, Robert Duvall. 101min. Digital 4K. 12A

Upon realising she is unexpectedly pregnant, young Long Island housewife Natalie flees with her husband's station wagon. Along the way, she picks up ex-high school football player 'Killer', who incurred a brain injury

on the field and who is en route to a slim promise of work in West Virginia. Coppola crafts a mournful New Hollywood tale of dissociated social misfits seeking a route to self-understanding.

SUN 8 JUN
18:20 NFT3

TUE 17 JUN
18:20 NFT2

TUE 24 JUN
20:50 NFT3



Diary of a Mad Housewife

USA 1970. Director Frank Perry. With Carrie Snodgress, Richard Benjamin, Frank Langella. 95min. Digital. 15

Based on a 1967 novel by Sue Kaufmann, with a screenplay adapted by Eleanor Perry, this film signalled for film critics an early 1970s micro-cycle of feel-bad dramas about women's dissatisfaction as wives, lovers and mothers. Constantly hectored and abused by her unbearable lawyer husband, Tina seeks out a lover in a dashing writer, who treats her with his own brand of misogyny and scorn. The film's satirical bourgeois hyperbole sits just askance of a pressing social reality.



A Woman Under the Influence

USA 1974. Director John Cassavetes. With Gena Rowlands, Peter Falk, Fred Draper. 147min. 35mm (restoration). 15

Wife to construction foreman and mother of three children, Mabel Longhetti moves to the beat of her own peculiarity. Rowlands gives an astounding performance of a woman's disintegration – a harrowingly human and deeply felt representation of emotional breakdown. It's a radiant assertion of a woman's insistence on the integrity of her self-image against a society and system that seeks only to pathologise her.

35mm restored print courtesy of the UCLA Film & Television Archive. Restoration funding provided by The Film Foundation and GUCCI

WED 11 JUN
18:15 NFT3

SAT 21 JUN
20:40 NFT2

SUN 22 JUN
15:10 NFT1

SAT 28 JUN
14:20 NFT1





The Feminist Moment: Non-fiction and Experimental Shorts + intro

Schmeerguntz

USA 1966. Directors Gunvor Nelson and Dorothy Wiley. 15min. Digital (restoration)

The Woman's Film

USA 1970. Directors Louise Alaimo, Judy Smith, Ellen Sorren. 40min. Digital

Janie's Janie

USA 1971. Directors Geri Ashur, Peter Barton, Marilyn Mulford, Stephanie Palewski. 25min. Digital

Across non-fiction and avant-garde film, women on the cusp of the feminist movement's second wave began to analyse the problems they faced in their daily lives. These three films embodied an emergent collective feminist voice using distinct strategies: collage, disruption and self-narration. These incendiary films diagnosed and illuminated women's shared oppressions through agitational montage of glossy advertising images and housework's unglamorous muck in *Schmeerguntz*, and strategies of feminist consciousness-raising in *The Woman's Film* and *Janie's Janie*.

THU 5 JUN
18:25 NFT2

twn
third world newsreel

Barbara Loden, Cinephile

Loden's cinematic inspirations and films and makers that sparked her imagination.



Los Olvidados The Young and the Damned

Mexico 1950. Director Luis Buñuel. With Alfonso Mejía, Stella Inda, Miguel Inclán, Roberto Cobo. 88min. Digital (restoration). EST. 12A

Fusing social realist and surrealist elements, Buñuel's film unflinchingly portrays the lives of a gang of juvenile delinquents on the destitute streets of Mexico City, led by the ruthless Jaibo. Edging towards neorealism but devoid of its sentimentalism, Buñuel zeroes in on the brutalities of life lived in poverty without any reprieve. It ranked among Barbara Loden's favourite films.

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Contains sexual violence, animal cruelty, violence

SUN 1 JUN
15:40 NFT1

TUE 17 JUN
20:50 NFT1



The Chelsea Girls (unconfirmed) + intro by season curator Elena Gorfinkel

USA 1966. Director Andy Warhol. With Nico, Brigid Berlin, Ondine, Gerard Malanga. 210min. 16mm

A group portrait in split-screen achieved through double-projection, the Factory's habitués and glittering superstars hypnotically monologue and playact themselves for Andy Warhol's camera in the Chelsea Hotel. Comprised of twelve unedited 16mm reels, four in colour and eight in black and white, *The Chelsea Girls* oscillates between scripted and improvised elements, as the faces, gestures, and eccentric personalities of the 1960s New York demimonde come into resplendent view.

SAT 21 JUN
13:15 NFT3

FILM
by
FLM



Sisters of the Gion *Gion no Shimai*

Japan 1936. **Director** Kenji Mizoguchi. **With** Isuzu Yamada, Yoko Umemura, Benkei Shiganoya. 69min. **35mm**. EST. U

Made directly after the production of his *Osaka Elegy*, Mizoguchi's tale of two geisha sisters in the Gion pleasure district of Kyoto in the 1930s details the struggles of the cynical and modern Omocho and the duty-bound Umekichi. Their contrasts evoke not only two different philosophies of geisha life amidst their struggles with debt, class hierarchy and misogynistic exploitation, but also gives view of a society endemically hostile to women's autonomy.



Mouchette

France 1967. **Director** Robert Bresson. **With** Nadine Nortier, Jean-Claude Guilbert, Maria Cardinal. 78min. Digital 4K. EST. 15

Robert Bresson's bleak, ineffable portrait of 24 hours in the life of 'little fly' evades platitudes of redemption. A 14-year-old girl is blighted by her environment: an ill mother, infant brother, an abusive father, alcoholism, social ostracism, isolation. Bresson's minimalist approach to the depredations faced by Mouchette produces a sublimely haunting image of inveterate cruelty and bitter circumstance.

Contains sexual violence, animal cruelty, self-harm

MON 16 JUN
20:50 NFT1

SAT 21 JUN
13:20 NFT1



SUN 1 JUN
18:30 NFT1

FRI 20 JUN
20:45 NFT2

All the Wandas

Barbara Loden's legacies



Vagabond *Sans toit ni loi*

France 1985. **Director** Agnès Varda. **With** Sandrine Bonnaire, Macha Meril, Stephane Freiss. 107min. Digital. EST. 15

Bonnaire gives an indelible portrayal, presented through a series of flashbacks, of a wandering woman who has refused all the comforts of bourgeois convention, to drift 'without roof or law', hitching across the frozen vineyards, windy fields and small roads of Southern France.

Varda's invention of Mona, like Loden's Wanda, fuses elements of fact and fiction into an evocation of an uncompromising life lived with fierce self-determination and in a state of precarity.

FRI 6 JUN
18:15 NFT3

SAT 21 JUN
15:15 NFT1

FRI 27 JUN
20:30 NFT2



Queen of Diamonds

USA 1991. **Director** Nina Menkes. **With** Tinka Menkes. 77min. Digital. 15

Menkes' arrestingly oneiric fugue of a film centres the character of Firdaus (played by her sister and frequent collaborator Tinka), a taciturn Las Vegas casino blackjack dealer who spends her days working and killing time. Menkes' trancelike aesthetic of striking tableaux disorient – whether of parched desert, neon's corrupted decadence, or mundane ritual – all the while critiquing the hidden violence that lurks beneath.



River of Grass

USA 1994. **Director** Kelly Reichardt. **With** Lisa Bowman, Dick Russel, Michael Buscemi, Larry Fessenden. 75min. Digital. 15

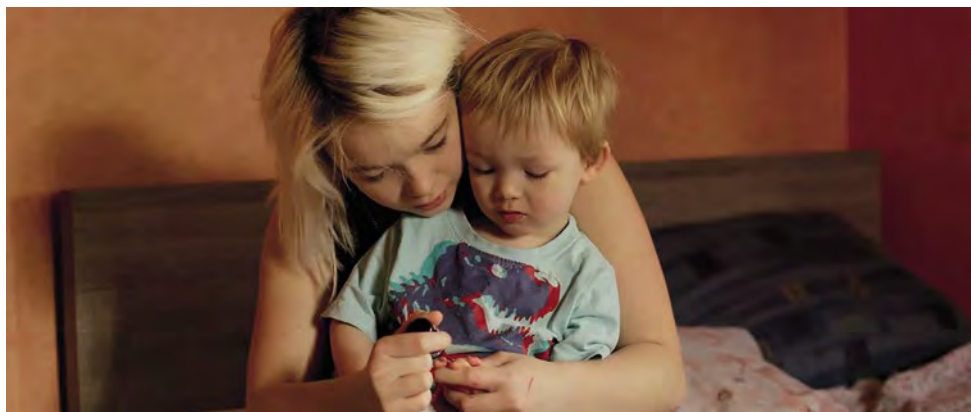
Describing her first feature as a 'road movie without the road, a love story without the love, and a crime film without the crime', Reichardt's couple-on-the-run caper is set in the Florida Everglades of her adolescence. Cozy, a bored housewife, whose laconic voiceover narrates the film, meets Lee, a hapless ne'er-do-well at a bar. Propelled by accident – a lost gun and a stray gunshot – they ricochet towards a botched fantasy of the outlaw life.

THU 19 JUN
20:40 NFT2

SAT 28 JUN
18:15 NFT3

THU 26 JUN
18:20 NFT3

SUN 29 JUN
18:30 NFT3



Milla

France-Portugal 2017. **Director** Valérie Massadian. **With** Severine Jonckeeere, Luc Chessel, Ethan Jonckeeere. 128min. Digital. EST

Milla traces the conditions of survival of a 17-year-old girl and her boyfriend Leo, as they glean a life on the margins, sleeping in cars and squatting in temporary shelter, as she faces motherhood. Like Loden's Wanda Goronski, Massadian's working-class subjects, played by

non-professionals, have been 'given no chance' by a society that thrives on class inequality. The filmmaker bestows these young vagabonds with a gaze of deep care and reverence.

TUE 24 JUN
18:00 NFT2

SAT 28 JUN
20:30 NFT2