



JANUS FILMS

LUMIÈRE, LE CINÉMA!

Directed by Thierry Frémaux



US Press:

Cinetic Media

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Film Info: US | 2025 | 103 minutes | B&W

SYNOPSIS

In one of those wonderful coincidences of history, lumière, the French word for “light,” was also the last name of brothers Auguste and Louis, whose brilliant invention, the cinematograph, helped to inaugurate the most beloved art form of the last 130 years. Institute Lumière director Thierry Frémaux uses *Lumière, Le Cinéma!* to guide the viewer through over a hundred shorts—some famous, some forgotten, some never before seen—directed by Lumière and company. In the process, Frémaux illuminates how the brothers employed the camera as a creative instrument as they (and their operators) mastered framing, staging, and subject selection for quotidian and exotic microdocumentaries as well as the first ever fictional motion pictures. The result is not only a glorious re(telling) of the genesis of cinema but a profound meditation on the beautiful world captured—and the mysterious world imagined—by the Lumières.

OVERVIEW

Lumière, Le Cinéma! includes more than a hundred Lumière works, in fully restored black and white, their original format and speed respected. It is composed of several chapters, as detailed below, within which the “vues” are united alongside a commentary written and spoken by Frémaux.

Lumière, Le Cinéma!, like its predecessor, *Lumière! The Adventure Begins*, is a documentary created solely from Lumière films, with dazzling cinematographic “vues” constituting the film in its entirety. The Lumière films – 1,400 in all and the very first cinematographic productions in history – began with *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* in 1895 and continued until 1905. 110 works have been carefully chosen from this abundant output and subsequently restored. To see them rediscovered in the cinemas, to which they gave birth, to re-experience and reevaluate them on this historic anniversary of the birth of cinema, that is what lies at the heart of this project.

Many of the works presented here furnish proof of an utterly remarkable imagination, ingenuity and technical audacity. The subjects filmed are more unusual, more singular, and the prints are magnificent, created from materials of the very highest quality.

Furthermore, Frémaux's commentary explores these lesser-known films from both a more detailed historical – and from a penetrating philosophical and aesthetic – perspective. It highlights, for example, fascinating technical points concerning films of the era, while reflecting deeply upon the work of the Lumière brothers: its scale, its artistic intention and its cinematic scope

Chapters

1894 - Animating Images

1895 - Projecting Images

1896 - Inventing the Public

Military Times

In the Streets, In the Countryside, Amidst Crowds

Distant Lands

The World's Promise

Trains and Journeys, Boats and Shorelines

Actors!

That Which Cinema Invents (The Beauty of the Cinematograph)

“Death will cease to be absolute”

These eleven chapters, preceded by a prologue and followed by an epilogue (and with a surprise from Francis Ford Coppola) each include between 6 and 12 short films.

The Lumière films restored

The films, amassed from various collections assembled at the CNC Film Archives, including those of the Institut Lumière, were restored under the direction of Maelle Arnaud and Thierry Frémaux by the L'Immagine Ritrovata lab (Bologna, Italy), with the collaboration of the CNC.

This stage is part of a broader project to restore the “Vues Lumière”: after 130 in 2016, a further 300 “vues” have been restored in 2024, thanks to the CNC, the Golden Globe Foundation and the Institut Lumière. In all, nearly 1,400 films (and some 1,000 additional, so-called “non-catalogue” films) constitute this restoration program, working with negative and positive elements from the collections of the Cinémathèque française, the Institut Lumière and the French Film Archives of the CNC.

130 years of the Cinematograph

Another distinction of this second opus lies in the context of its release, since 2025 will mark the 130-year anniversary of the birth of cinema. *Lumière, Le Cinéma!* is also conceived of as the spearhead of national and international celebrations, recounting as it does in a new way the birth of this revolutionary art, that decisive historical moment with unimaginable consequences, still so present – and so significant – in our lives. Cinematic forms, spaces and issues evolve at high speed, yet cinema demonstrates an extraordinary, constantly renewed, permanence: everything that was already present in the Lumière films. This then is the heart of these joyful celebrations being organized for 2025, to which the Institut Lumière will add all its strength, expertise and passion.

ABOUT THIERRY FRÉMAUX

Born in Isère, France, Thierry Frémaux grew up in Minguettes, in the Lyon suburb of Vénissieux, where he was introduced at a very young age to cinema by his father, who ran a film club. He became a commentator for the community radio station Radio Canut and studied the social history of cinema to Master of Advanced Study level. He wrote, among others, a master's thesis on the early days of the journal *Positif*.

A volunteer at the Institut Lumière in Lyon since its foundation in 1982, he became an employee in 1983 at the suggestion of Bernard Chardère. In 1995, he was appointed artistic director, alongside the President, Bertrand Tavernier, in which role he organized the centenary celebrations of cinema and the creation of a collection of books published by Actes Sud, as well as the restoration of films by the Lumière brothers.

In 1999, he turned down the directorship of the Cinémathèque française before being made artistic director of the Cannes Festival in 2001. In 2007, he was appointed General Delegate of the Festival by his predecessor Gilles Jacob, who had become President.

With his team, Frémaux established and has run the Lumière Festival in Lyon since 2009. He also initiated the Lumière Prize, the first recipient of which was Clint Eastwood.

In 2017, he created the film *Lumière! The Adventure Begins*, which for the first time collected and offered commentary on 108 newly restored films by the Lumière brothers, and which enjoyed great success both in France and abroad.

Thierry Frémaux is also the author of a number of books, including *Official Selection* (Grasset), the diary of a year of the Cannes selection process. His latest book

CREDITS

Production:	Institut Lumière/Sorties d'Usine Productions
Written, directed and narrated by:	Thierry Frémaux
Executive producer:	Maelle Arnaud
Associate producer:	Nathanaël Karmitz/mk2
Production manager:	Margot Rossi
Editors:	Jonathan Cayssials and Simon Gemelli with Thierry Frémaux
Historical advisors:	Fabrice Calzettoni and Jean-Marc Lamotte
Music:	Gabriel Fauré
Format:	B&W