



# **Cinema at the Shore: The Beach in French Film (New Studies in European Cinema)**

*Fiona Handyside*

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From Brigitte Bardot in her bikini at the Cannes Film Festival, to François Ozon's intimate portrayals of grief and loss, some of the most iconic and challenging moments in French cinema are associated with the beach. *Cinema at the Shore* argues that the Parisian cityscape is not the only significant definition of space in French cinema and instead explores the industrial, aesthetic and thematic relations of French cinema to the beach.

Examining a range of films from the 1950s to the present day - including popular comedies by Jacques Tati and Patrice Leconte, the lively and ruminative documentaries of Agnès Varda, the classicism of Eric Rohmer, and the provocations of Catherine Breillat - this book showcases the dynamism and importance of the beach as a site for the reconfiguration of French cinematic identity itself. The beach offers a unique crystallization of our attitudes towards nature, culture, the body, space and time. In its constant mobility, its close, yet distinctive, relationship with nature, and its paradoxical centrality in the French cultural imaginary as a site of relaxation and holidays, the beachscape, re-framed and re-imaged by the camera, offers new ways of conceiving of the spatial politics of French cinema.

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