

Sun screen. Outdoor treats for cinephiles.

*Cinema addict and guest blogger **Bren O'Callaghan** gives us his summer's worth of Manchester movie tips and outdoor events. Read more about what's on in Manchester at www.creativetourist.com*

As the person sitting under, and not upon a towel beneath a blazing sun, for whom nothing less than a nuclear blast could rip the cloth from my mushroom-flesh legs, I can think of little better once the British summer limps into view (puffing on an inhaler) than to plan movie-watching appointments both outside and in. Let's face it, we're going to need some dry options once the livestock start floating past the upper windows. And there's plenty on offer. Despite an apparent lack of variety in the city other than the standard multiplexes and the dependable [Cornerhouse](#), a much larger range of programming exists just beneath the surface.

Although only in the second year of operation, the [Screenfields](#) series in Spinningfields is a welcome addition to a silvered glass streetscape that certainly appeals to neat freaks like myself. Do they vacuum it on the hour, every hour? I hope so. It provides film lovers of all ages with an immaculate opportunity to gather before a variety of cinematic mash – easy to digest and seasoned with nostalgia. Be it Audrey Hepburn in *Roman Holiday*, the ASBO classic *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* or Studio Ghibli's eye-wateringly beautiful *Spirited Away*, deckchairs can be hired on a first-come, first-served basis, although only drinks purchased from Giraffe bar can be consumed on site. Any unauthorised carry-outs will be confiscated but politely returned afterwards, most probably gleaming and smelling of furniture polish.



If you can ignore the lunatics queuing for a glimpse of surrounding air conditioning units on the incomprehensible draw that is the big wheel, the now-vintage screen in Exchange Square offers annual free, [live relays from The Royal Opera House in London's Covent Garden](#). Bizet's *Carmen* unleashes the ultimate dirty girl (8 June, 7pm) with a national sing-along from 6.15pm when song sheets will be distributed. There's not a swan in sight for The Royal Ballet's Triple Bill (10 June, 7.30pm), a challenging contemporary selection including a musical score by The White Stripes, before the season concludes with Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* (13 July, 7.30pm). Featuring Plácido Domingo in the title role, the scheming citizens of 14th Century Genoa run around quaffing poison like it was Pimms.

Should these options appear too mainstream or highbrow, darker and more intense celluloid sandwich fillings are there for the nibbling. The rusty meat hook that is [Trauma](#), MMU's English Research Institute's regular forum on extreme filmic practice, squats gibbering within the All Saints Building on Oxford Road. Screening free films to all most Monday nights, the website includes an impressive archive of past themes, from Thai Terror to Rock Apocalypse. Over at the Kings Arms in Salford, the [Manchester Film Cooperative](#) challenges the economic, social and political status-quo with a selection including Revolution OS (29 June), a documentary about the open source software revolution.

[The Family Friendly Film Festival](#) (30 July – 15 August) melds new and classic titles with spectacular heritage settings, and many films are free. Highlights include spine-tingling evening screenings at Salford Museum and Art Gallery, Victoria Baths and The Manchester Art Gallery; multi-sensory thrills at MOSI's 4D Cinema, and Harry Potter Days within the Hogwarts-like surroundings of The John Rylands Library. For the very young, under 5s are invited to attend First Flicks, a series of yell-friendly showings where shame can be exchanged for the sure knowledge of dropping a coin in your child's cultural piggy-bank.



Proving that kids shouldn't be allowed to have all the fun, I'll be presenting my own case for deflating cineaste sniffiness with Scratch 'n Sniff Cinema presents My Beautiful Laundrette (16 – 17 July). [Hub gallery and innovation space](#) on Salford riverside will be transformed into Tub for two days only, replete with bubble wands, scent-imbued scratch cards and the whiff of grubby money and detergent for this cult tale of unlikely love among the suds.

The audience will be prompted to identify odours paired with key scenes that range from the obvious to the abstract, complemented by a special guest for an audience Q&A and limited edition screenprints by local artist and [Hotbed Press](#) resident Simon Misra.

Now, with any luck the snow will be falling by August. I do love a scalding hot bath and a warm jumper.

Bren O'Callaghan www.brenocallaghan.co.uk is a Manchester born and based freelance event producer, curator and writer who enjoys responding to informal and unexpected settings, site-specific work and dodging the swinging scythe of cultural snobbery. Images (top to bottom): Screenfields (Jason Lock); The Crocodiles, Constantin Film; My Beautiful Laundrette, Park Circus